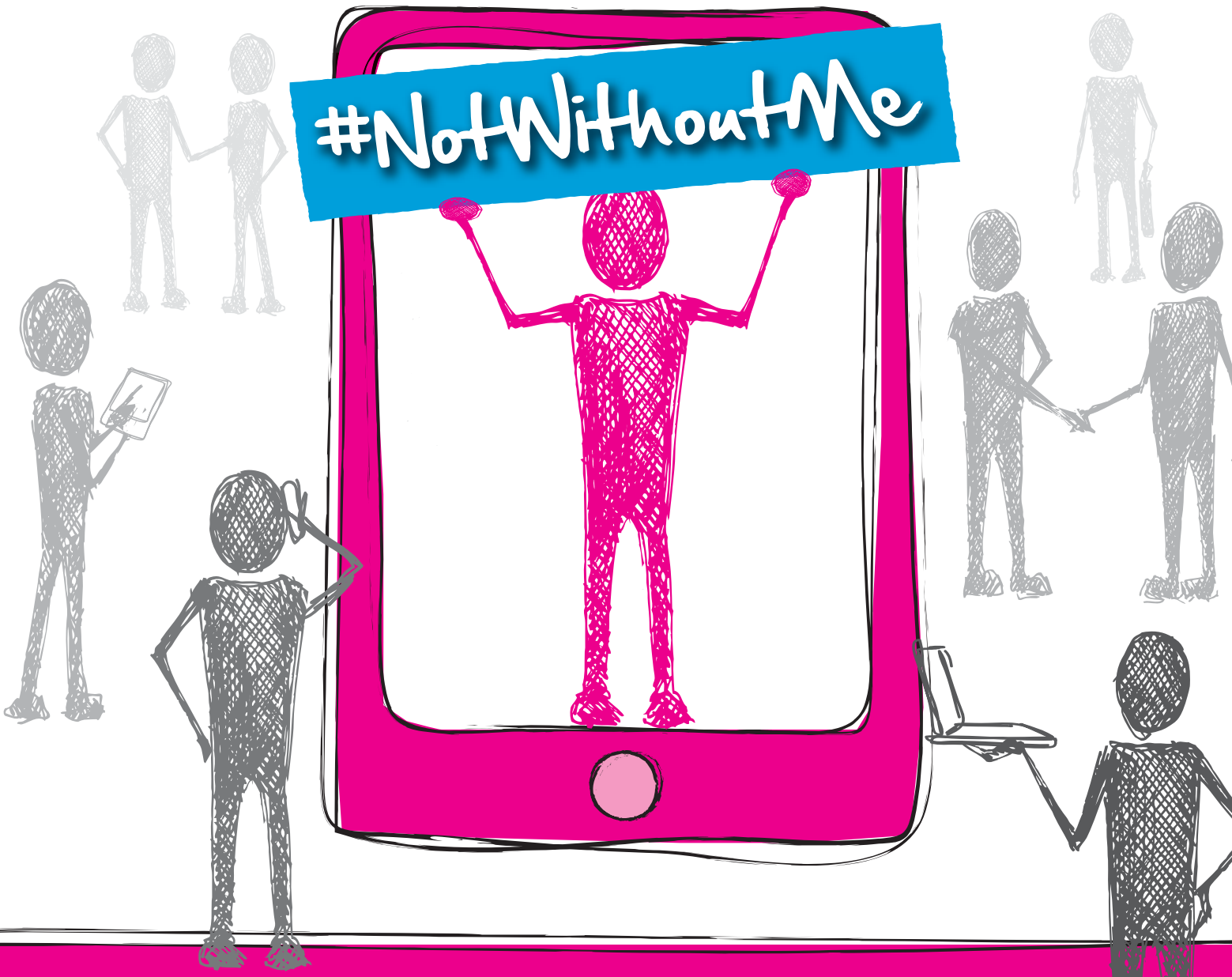CarnegieUK
TRUST

CHANGING MINDS • CHANGING LIVES

#NotWithoutMe

A digital world for all?

Findings from a programme of digital inclusion for vulnerable young people across the UK

Gina Wilson & Anna Grant

Digital Futures

Practice

#NotWithoutMe 2017

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T R U S T

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The Carnegie UK Trust would foremost like to thank our five project partners; Signal Film and Media, The Pavilion, Mencap in Northern Ireland, Young Scot and The Prince's Trust Scotland and to all the young people who took part in each of the four projects.

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We hope that this report will benefit other practitioners, policy makers and academics across the UK and Ireland interested in digital inclusion for vulnerable people.

Projects delivered by:
- Signal Film and Media: Steph Bryant, Loren Slater and Karen Bird.
- The Pavilion: Kim Price, Mark Tattershall, Fatma Osman and Joanne Kelly.
- Young Scot and The Prince's Trust Scotland: Allan Lindsay and Carrie Manning.
- Mencap in Northern Ireland: Pauline Spence, Maggie Hamilton, Colette Slevin, Jacqui Clarke, Laura Stoops and Roseleen (Rosie) Maguire.

Contents

Executive Summary

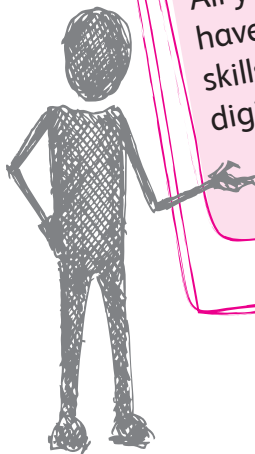## The Challenge

The Problem

Digital exclusion is a significant challenge and reduces long-term wellbeing.

The Barriers

- Low motivation to learn or low confidence in existing skills
- Limited access to the internet or technology
- Limited basic digital or literacy skills
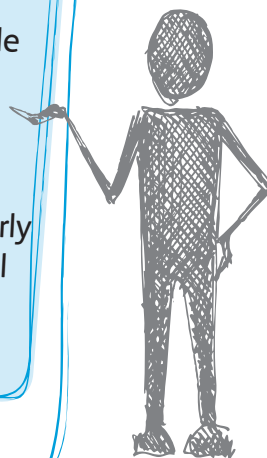
The Assumption

All young people have basic digital skills and are digitally literate.

The Reality

Many young people do not have basic digital skills.

Vulnerable young people are particularly in need of additional support to improve their skills.
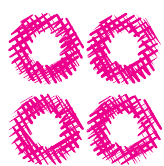
The Implications:

- Inequality of opportunity and a deepening digital divide
- Digital exclusion and social exclusion are known to be linked
- Lower long-term wellbeing

What is needed?

- Practical initiatives, action based research, innovative policy interventions
- Improved and extended evidence base
- Raise awareness of the challenge
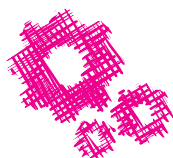
The #NotWithoutMe Programme

4 projects

£10k funding each

**1 year duration
Jan 2016 – Jan 2017**

Over 80 sessions run

mencap
The voice of learning disability

Prince's Trust
Scotland

YOUNG SCOT

SIGNAL FILM&MEDIA

ENTHUSE ENGAGE ENJOY ENRICH
THE PAVILION
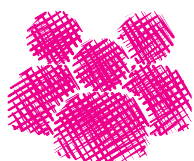
100 young people aged 11–25 supported:
29 – The Pavilion
40 – Young Scot and The Prince's Trust
16 – Mencap in Northern Ireland
15 – Signal Film and Media
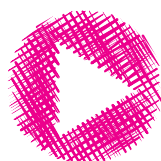
Creative content outputs
11 Films/Vlogs
40+ Blogs
News stories
Drama productions
Radio interviews
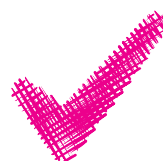
Skills improved include:
Online safety
Video creation
Problem solving
Digital photography
Peer working
Increased confidence
Positive online behaviours

#NotWithoutMe @ the BBC Cross-Sector Event
80+ participants
224 contributors on Twitter
327,000 accounts reached
Top 10 trending # on Twitter

The Findings

Working with vulnerable young people on digital projects

- The value of learning alongside peers.

- Intersectionality is important, a diverse range of young people need to be visible and reflected in digital offerings.

- Digital work is useful to explore identity, self-confidence and wellbeing.

- Providing a high level of individual support within a group setting can be problematic due to diverse interests, abilities and motivations.

- Challenges of recruitment and retention, particularly among groups 'in transition'.

Format for delivery

- Lack of understanding around purposeful digital skills.

- Creating with high-tech kit can be an appealing 'hook'.

- Co-production with young people is necessary to develop relevant and engaging content.

- The importance of developing digital skills offline.

- Greater appreciation that digital skills training can require long timescales.

Measurement and evaluation

- Standard methods of digital skills measurement are not always appropriate and may not capture the varied types of progression online.

- Digital skills are now invariably considered life skills.

Structural challenges

- Assumptions and presumptions around digital skills can be held by everyone, including young people themselves.

- Lack of other basic skills including basic literacy compound digital skills challenges.

- Advanced skills in one digital area can mask low skills in other digital competencies.

Support Networks & Community Engagement

- The adult support networks for young people, including parents, carers and professionals, would benefit from digital upskilling opportunities.

- Digital skills training is not sector specific and may appear in many different types of initiatives working with young people, such as employability and mental health programmes.
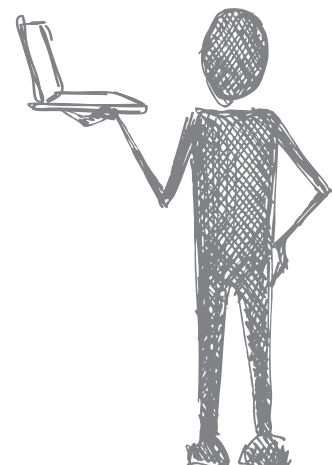
The Recommendations

Working with vulnerable young people

✔ Practitioners should take a flexible approach to delivery methods.

✔ Organisations which already have trusted relationships with young people must drive recruitment and engagement.

✔ Language to be inclusive and understandable by young people.

✔ Appreciate that advanced skills in one digital area may mask low skills in other digital competencies.

Format for delivery

✔ Ensure that digital skills training and content relates to the participants' real-life context.
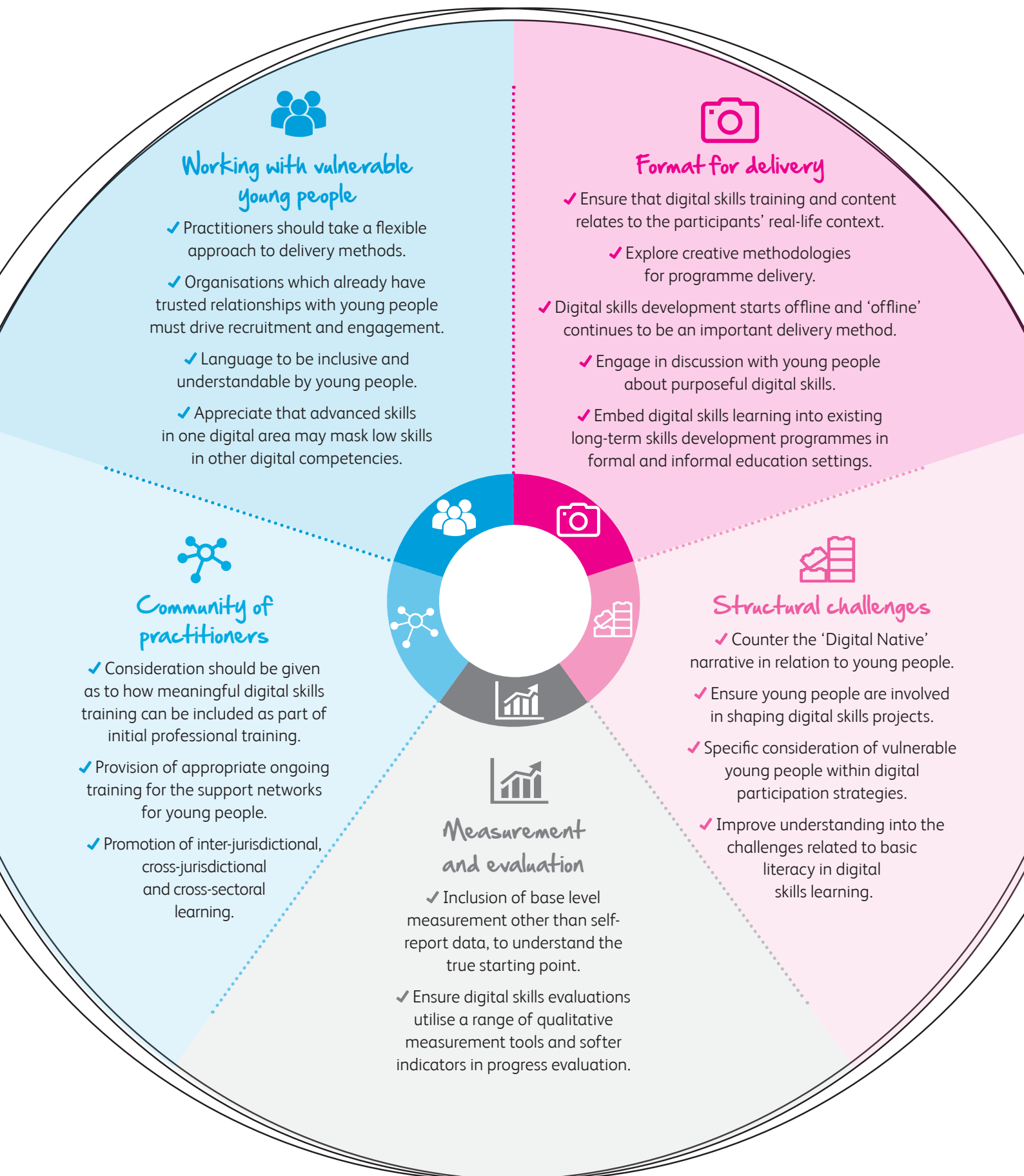
✔ Explore creative methodologies for programme delivery.

✔ Digital skills development starts offline and 'offline' continues to be an important delivery method.

✔ Engage in discussion with young people about purposeful digital skills.

✔ Embed digital skills learning into existing long-term skills development programmes in formal and informal education settings.

Community of practitioners

✔ Consideration should be given as to how meaningful digital skills training can be included as part of initial professional training.

✔ Provision of appropriate ongoing training for the support networks for young people.

✔ Promotion of inter-jurisdictional, cross-jurisdictional and cross-sectoral learning.

Structural challenges

✔ Counter the 'Digital Native' narrative in relation to young people.

✔ Ensure young people are involved in shaping digital skills projects.

✔ Specific consideration of vulnerable young people within digital participation strategies.

✔ Improve understanding into the challenges related to basic literacy in digital skills learning.

Measurement and evaluation

✔ Inclusion of base level measurement other than self-report data, to understand the true starting point.

✔ Ensure digital skills evaluations utilise a range of qualitative measurement tools and softer indicators in progress evaluation.

Our Vision

Digital exclusion is a persistent challenge. Although the digital divide may be reducing in terms of the number of people who are not digitally engaged, for those who remain excluded the divide is deepening. This compounds existing inequalities and disadvantages.

In the eyes of many, the terms 'digital' and 'young people' have become synonymous. The 'natural' ability of young people to access and use technology in an innately superior way to that of older generations is often taken as fact. This has given rise to the assumption that young people are 'digital natives'. The evidence does not, however, support this narrative.

Young people are not digital natives, indeed not all young people possess even basic digital skills. Digital literacy is actively and passively developed through *ongoing* access, support and training. Whilst these opportunities are abundant for many young people, there are as many as 300,000 young people in the UK who still lack these basic digital skills.[1]
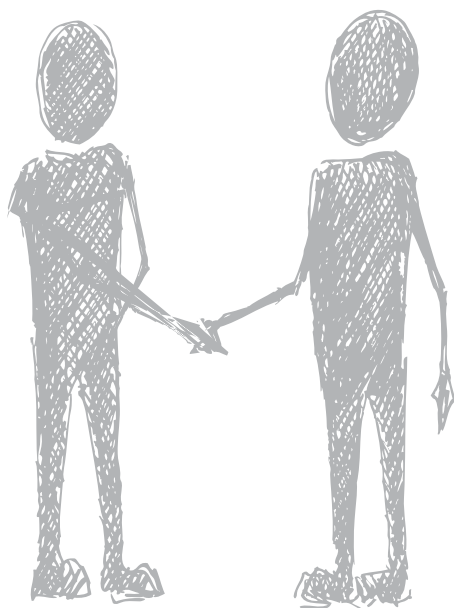
Those who are vulnerable, particularly those at points of transition in their life (unemployed, homeless, in care, in secure accommodation, excluded from mainstream education, seeking asylum) are most at risk of slipping through the net and falling outside the digital mainstream.[2] Yet attention on the issues of digital skills, specifically for vulnerable young people, has been limited to date.

We believe that no young person should experience digital exclusion. All young people should have the digital skills and literacy to both take advantage of the benefits and navigate the risks that digital world can offer. We want the conversation to move past the skills deficits of specific young people, and onto a narrative around creating a society and context in which all young people can thrive online.

In 2015, the Carnegie UK Trust launched #NotWithoutMe to develop evidence and test innovative engagement techniques to improve digital skills and literacy among vulnerable young people across the UK.[3] Whilst our long-term goal is optimistic, our objective for this programme was far more reserved. Rather than expect transformational outcomes of success for the young people involved, such as gaining employment or further education, we wanted to understand the process of designing and delivering 'digital inclusion' projects with different vulnerable groups. The following report details the main aspects of the #NotWithoutMe programme, key learnings and resulting recommendations for practitioners, policymakers and academics.

1   Nominet Trust (2017) *Digital Reach: Digital Skills For The Hardest-To-Reach Young People* http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/Online_NT_Digital_Reach_Prospectus_Final.pdf [accessed July 2017]

2   Eynon, R and Geniets, A (2012) On the Periphery? Understanding Low and Discontinued Internet Use Amongst Young People in Britain, Nominet Trust. http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/NT%20lapsed%20Internet%20users%20final.pdf [accessed July 2017]

3   Whilst access to personal technology is highlighted as an issue for these groups of young people, the #NotWithoutMe programme specifically decided to not focus on tackling access as a key priority, but to focus on skills development. Access was addressed as relevant within some of the pilot projects.

Context

Outlining the need for #NotWithoutMe

No-one should experience digital exclusion. All people should have the opportunity to take advantage of the wide range of wellbeing benefits that technology can offer. The Carnegie UK Trust's previous research on digital exclusion has demonstrated that those who are most likely to be disadvantaged according to almost all other socio-economic measures are also most likely to be digitally excluded.[4]

The Trust's work has identified many interventions intended to promote digital inclusion by addressing the four main barriers to being online – skills, access, cost and motivation.[5] Interventions to tackle digital exclusion across the UK have focused on a wide range of groups most likely to be offline, including older people, social housing tenants and those who are unemployed. #NotWithoutMe was developed in 2015 in response to the relative lack of digital inclusion initiatives and basic digital skills support targeted at vulnerable young people. In the months since, pioneering research, government strategies, commissions and enquiries have all started to give more attention to this issue. They all recognise the need for greater intervention.

The current situation

The body of evidence on digital inclusion is growing, and the digital world is developing at an exponential pace: yet a fifth of the UK adult population (21% of people aged 15 and over) still lack basic digital skills.[6] Estimates suggest that of this figure, over 300,000 are young people aged 15 to 25.[7]

There is no equivalent figure for young people under the age of 15, however Ofcom provides useful insight into the media literacy skills of children and young people. For example, just over half (53%) of young people aged 12 to 15 who go online think they can easily delete information that they have posted about themselves if they don't want people to see it.[8] A sizeable number of young people are unaware that 'delete', is not necessarily delete. Information navigation and management is one of the basic digital skills most likely to be lacking amongst vulnerable young people.[9]

The Children's Commissioner for England works to highlight issues affecting the most vulnerable young people, her Growing Up Digital Taskforce is unequivocal in its view that 'children are not being equipped with adequate skills to negotiate their lives online'.[10] Research for The Prince's Trust found that 40% of disadvantaged young people had low levels of 'netiquette', that is skills to make decisions about their own online behaviour and safety, and how to deal appropriately with the behaviour of others online.[11]

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4   White, D (2013) Across the Divide: Tackling Digital Exclusion in Glasgow https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/carnegieuktrust/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2016/02/pub14550115961.pdf [accessed July 2017]

5   Carnegie UK Trust (2014) Making Digital Real: Case Studies of How to Help the Final Fifth Get Online https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/carnegieuktrust/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2016/02/pub1455011481.pdf [accessed July 2017]

6   Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index (2017) http://www.lloydsbank.com/assets/media/pdfs/lloyds-bank-consumer-digital-index-2017.pdf p39 [accessed July 2017] Which includes the Basic Digital Skills Survey.

7   Nominet Trust (2017) Digital Reach: Digital Skills For The Hardest-To-Reach Young People http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/Online_NT_Digital_Reach_Prospectus_Final.pdf [accessed July 2017]

8   Ofcom (2017) Media Literacy Tracker – Children Aged 5-15 and Parents https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/105138/Media-literacy-tracker-2017-parents-and-children-aged-5-15.pdf Table 174 [accessed July 2017]

9   Buchanan, S and Tuckerman, L (2016) The Information Behaviours of Disadvantaged and Disengaged Adolescents. https://pure.strath.ac.uk/portal/files/45617343/Buchanan_Tuckerman_JD_2016_The_information_behaviours_of_disadvantaged_and_disengaged.pdf [accessed July 2017]

10 Children's Commissioner (England) (2017) Growing Up Digital: A Report of the Growing Up Digital Taskforce https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Growing-Up-Digital-Taskforce-Report-January-2017_0.pdf Page 3 [accessed July 2017)

11 Helsper, E and Smirnova, S (2016) Slipping Through The Net https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/research-policies-reports/slipping-through-the-net Page 8 [accessed July 2017]

The House of Lords Communications Select Committee (2017) enquiry on growing up with the internet, reported undisputed evidence that young people need much more support to develop digital literacy, particularly critical skills to understand and question how and why they are encountering information online.[12] The Committee's report drew out questions about where digital literacy skills education should sit. Inclusion within IT education implies 'it is a technical issue rather than a behavioural challenge'.[13] The Committee favoured a more systemic approach:

'It is the view of this Committee that digital literacy should be the fourth pillar of a child's education alongside reading, writing and mathematics, and be resourced and taught accordingly.'[14]

The Young Scot 5Rights Youth Commission, consisting of 19 young people aged 14 to 21, spent a year (reporting in April 2017) gathering views on how Scotland can become a nation which realises the rights of children and young people in the digital world. Their recommendations around digital literacy and skills are clear: 'We need to be taught the skills to use digital technologies effectively'.[15] The Young Scot 5Rights Youth Commissioners call for schools, teachers and youth workers to feel empowered and confident around contemporary technology and the role it plays in the lives of young people.

As a result of the Young Scot 5Rights Youth Commissioners work, the Scottish Government's refreshed action focussed *Digital Strategy* aspires to:

'Use the Year of Young People (2018) as a platform to establish a clear commitment to digital rights and responsibilities that empower people to access the digital world creatively, knowledgeably and fearlessly'.[16]

In policy terms, the digital literacy needs of young people are to take a leading role. Practical implementation ideas will be required to ensure this succeeds for all young people.

In March 2017, the UK Government launched the *UK Digital Strategy*, with clear recognition that the reasons for digital exclusion are complex and that for those left behind, 'we must take a more targeted approach to digital inclusion'. The *UK Digital Strategy* encourages a cross-sectoral approach to digital inclusion and cites examples of industry offers to help improve digital literacy and has led to the establishment of new Digital Skills Partnership to improve collaboration.[17]

Who needs support?

The assumption that all young people are frequent, confident, able users of the internet and digital technology can be highly alienating for the minority who are not.[18] Those who are vulnerable, particularly those at points of transition in their life (unemployed, homeless, in care, in secure accommodation) are most at risk of falling outside of the digital mainstream.[19] Young people who lack basic online skills can be too embarrassed to admit difficulties or seek support. A lack of confidence or digital literacy prevents young people from accessing opportunities in employment, education, health care, housing, benefits, culture and social experiences. The difference in life chances between the digitally included and those who are excluded will become increasingly stark.

Vulnerable young people are broadly recognised as those who are in the care of the state; whose needs may reflect adverse family circumstances; whose needs reflect features of child development; or who are in receipt of statutory support services.[20] It is these young people who are most in need of additional support.

12 Select Committee on Communications (2017) Growing Up With The Internet https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201617/ld-select/ldcomuni/130/130.pdf HL Paper 130 [accessed July 2017]

13 Select Committee on Communications (2017) Growing Up With The Internet https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201617/ldselect/ldcomuni/130/130.pdf page 67 [accessed July 2017]

14 Select Committee on Communications (2017) Growing Up With The Internet https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201617/ldselect/ldcomuni/130/130.pdf page 69 [accessed July 2017]

15 Young Scot 5Rights Youth Commission (2017) *Our Digital Rights: How Scotland can realise the rights of children and young people in the digital world.* http://www.youngscot.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Five_Rights_Report_2017_May.pdf page 11 [accessed July 2017]

16 Scottish Government (2017) Realising Scotland's Full Potential in a Digital World: A Digital Strategy for Scotland http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/03/7843/0 [accessed July 2017]

17 For example, BT has pledged to offer 750 work placements to disadvantaged young people not in education or employment across the UK in 2017, to help improve their tech literacy.

18 Our definition of young people can be found in the glossary.

19 Eynon, R and Geniets, A (2012) On the Periphery? Understanding Low and Discontinued Internet Use Amongst Young People in Britain, Nominet Trust. http://www.nominettrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/NT%20lapsed%20Internet%20users%20final.pdf [accessed July 2017]

20 Children's Commissioner (2017) Defining child vulnerability; Definitions, frameworks and groups https://www.childrenscom-missioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CCO-TP2-Defin-ing-Vulnerability-Cordis-Bright-2.pdf [accessed July 2017]

Low levels of literacy, prevalent among vulnerable young people, are associated with limited information-seeking behaviours.[21] The information world for disadvantaged young people is impoverished. Digital support needs of young people, particularly those who are marginalised or vulnerable, are not well understood.

'Children's online activities are rarely measured except by marketers; their online voices are rarely heard by those with power to act in their interests; adult rights in digital spaces frequently trump those of children; and the task of ensuring their rights in digital environments is passed from pillar to post'.[22]

There are many benefits to being online. However, the digital world also comes with dangers and unknowns which can negatively affect wellbeing. Young people need support to build their resilience.

'While restricting access to the internet may reduce the likelihood of young people experiencing online risk, it also restricts the opportunities for young people to develop digital skills and to build resilience'.[23]

Young people cannot develop the skills they will need to live independently in the future if they are not given the opportunity to develop them while they are in supported environments.

Digital tools can provide a vital gateway for many young people to express their identity. More than a quarter (27%) of young people aged 12 to 15 report feeling more able to be themselves online

than face-to-face.[24] For vulnerable young people who feel isolated from their immediate peer group, finding online communities of support can be a lifeline.

How should support be given?

'Young people cannot simply be left to learn digital skills by themselves'.[25] Interventions are required. The opportunity for young people to get hands on with technology and explore it within their own space and time is important, but this must be balanced with support from trusted faces, and motivation.

Digital skills initiatives 'need to start from an understanding of the outcomes that people are trying to achieve through their engagement with ICT',[26] in other words, start with the person, not the technology.

'Evaluate these initiatives by measuring whether the groups improved their economic, social, civic, cultural and personal wellbeing as a result of their increased digital engagement.'[27]

There are common measures and proxy indicators which can be used to evaluate digital inclusion

21 Buchanan, S and Tuckerman, L (2016) The Information Behaviours of Disadvantaged and Disengaged Adolescents. https://pure.strath.ac.uk/portal/files/45617343/Buchanan_Tuckerman_JD_2016_The_information_behaviours_of_disadvantaged_and_disengaged.pdf [accessed July 2017]

22 Livingston, S and Third, A (2017) Why children are not the exception that proves the rule in internet governance http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mediapolicyproject/2017/06/15/why-children-are-not-the-exception-that-proves-the-rule-in-internet-governance/ [accessed July 2017]

23 Frith, E (2017) Social media and children's mental health: a review of the evidence https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Social-Media_Mental-Health_EPI-Report.pdf [accessed July 2017] page 29

24 Ofcom (2017) Media Literacy Tracker – Children Aged 5-15 and Parents https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/105138/Media-literacy-tracker-2017-parents-and-children-aged-5-15.pdf Table 186 [accessed July 2017]

25 Eynon, R & Geniets, A (2016) The digital skills paradox: how do digitally excluded youth develop skills to use the internet? Learning, Media and Technology Vol.41, Iss.3.

26 Helsper, E (2016) Inequalities in digital literacy: definitions, measurements, explanations and policy implications http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/68329/1/Helsper_Inequalities%20in%20digital.pdf [accessed July 2017] page 182

27 Helsper, E (2016) Inequalities in digital literacy: definitions, measurements, explanations and policy implications http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/68329/1/Helsper_Inequalities%20in%20digital.pdf [accessed July 2017] page 183

projects.[28] These can be supplemented and adapted, using those which are most relevant. The indicators are designed to help demonstrate the wider economic, health and social benefits of digital inclusion. Digital inequalities are likely to be connected to social and economic inequalities, progress towards improvement may be slow, but significant for individuals.[29]

#NotWithoutMe used the five pillars of the *Basic Digital Skills Framework*[30] as the basis for which skills the project should focus on developing. However, the *Digital Capability Framework[31]* includes a sixth pillar (digital identity and wellbeing) which should underpin any work with vulnerable young people. This pillar relates to the capacities to develop and project a positive digital identity; to manage digital reputation; to look after personal health; safety; relationships and work-life balance in digital settings. Many organisations working with vulnerable young people will be most concerned with this behavioural skill set, and may begin their engagement work from this point.

Groups often respond well to co-design activities and peer mentoring approaches. 'Peer mentoring is widespread, and especially well-used in the mental-health and prison sectors'.[32] Co-designing initiatives with young people is more resource intensive at the development stage, but it reduces the possibility of making inaccurate assumptions and increases the likelihood of creating a meaningful experience for participants.

Young people don't learn in isolation, they often turn to parents, carers or friends for advice. The digital skills and knowledge of people around the young person contributes to their ability to develop skills. Resources and activities to support

parents, carers and professionals to develop their own knowledge can markedly improve the outcomes for young people.[33] Practical guidance,[34] inspiring examples, safety checklists and opportunities to share experiences can provide sufficient scaffolding to enable practitioners to try new digital skills engagement activities.[35]

Key frameworks underpinning #NotWithoutMe

At the time of project development, four key frameworks underpinned #NotWithoutMe.

1. **Basic Digital Skills Framework**[36]
   Framework outlining the five main areas of digital capabilities – managing information; communicating; transacting; problem solving and creating.

2. **Digital Inclusion Outcomes Framework**[37]
   A flexible template for benchmarking and evaluating digital inclusion activities.

3. **5Rights**[38]
   Framework of rights for children and young people online – to remove; to know; to safety and support; to informed and conscious use and to digital literacy.

4. **Digitally Agile National Principles**[39]
   Guiding principles for the use of digital technology and social media in Community Learning and Development.

Projects that applied to be part of #NotWithoutMe were asked to consider these Frameworks and integrate them into their delivery plans where appropriate.

28 Digital Inclusion Outcomes Framework https://local.go-on.co.uk/resources/the-digital-inclusion-outcomes-framework/ [accessed July 2017]

29 White, D (2016) Digital Participation and Social Justice https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/carnegieuktrust/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2016/09/v3-2697-CUKT-Digital-Participation-summary.pdf

30 Basic Digital Skills Framework https://www.thetechpartnership.com/basic-digital-skills/basic-digital-skills-framework/ [accessed July 2017] The five pillars are managing information, communicating, transacting, problem solving and creating.

31 Jisc (2017) Building Digital Capabilities: The Six Elements Defined http://repository.jisc.ac.uk/6611/1/JFL0066F_DIGIGAP_MOD_IND_FRAME.PDF [accessed July 2017]

32 Piercy, L (2016) Digital Skills For The Hardest to Reach: Literature Review https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/research-publications/reboot_uk_literature_review.pdf page 3

33 ParentZone. Critical Thinking Online: a Parent's Guide https://parentzone.org.uk/article/critical-thinking-online-parents-guide [accessed July 2017]

34 Screenagers (2016) Guidance for Digital Youth Work http://www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/Screenagers-Guidance.pdf

35 NSPCC https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/ [accessed July 2017]

36 Basic Digital Skills Framework https://www.thetechpartnership.com/globalassets/pdfs/basic-digital-skills-standards/basic_digital_skills_framework.pdf [accessed July 2017]

37 Digital Inclusion Outcomes Framework https://local.go-on.co.uk/resources/the-digital-inclusion-outcomes-framework/ [accessed July 2017]

38 5Rights Framework http://5rightsframework.com/ [accessed July 2017]

39 Digitally Agile National Principles https://www.digitallyagilecld.org/ [accessed July 2017]

Case Studies

Overview

#NotWithoutMe was launched in late 2015 and supported four projects across the UK to run from January 2016 to January 2017. Each pilot received £10,000 to test original engagement techniques and develop innovative practice methods to improve digital inclusion and increase digital skills for vulnerable young people. The Trust received 40 applications from interested organisations, with the highest number from organisations working with care experienced young people. An advisory group of digital inclusion and youth work experts was convened to select the projects that would receive funding.

The pilot projects were geographically spread across the UK and worked with young people experiencing diverse challenges, vulnerabilities and digital needs. Each project developed their own methodology for engaging participants and delivering digital skills training. A diverse mix of pilots were chosen and the Trust sought to draw out challenges or learnings both unique to each project and those common to all that would be useful to share with a wider audience.

The four projects were each led by an external organisation or partnership:

- **Signal Film and Media**: working with care experienced young people and young people 'on the cusp of care' in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria.
- **The Pavilion**: working with young people excluded from mainstream education in Barnet, Greater London.
- **Young Scot and The Prince's Trust**: working with young people not in education, training or employment in Glasgow.
- **Mencap in Northern Ireland**: working with young people with learning disabilities in Belfast and County Fermanagh.

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Each of these projects are described in detail in case studies in this chapter. Each case study provides an overview of organisation, details about the group of young people the organisation worked with, the delivery method, their outputs and findings. These learnings cover a range of topics, which include both insights directly related to delivering digital skills training and, more broadly, learnings around working with groups of vulnerable young people. Discussion of the main findings from across the #NotWithoutMe project is developed in the subsequent Key Themes chapter.

The information within each case study is taken from a variety of sources including the organisation's initial funding application, ongoing feedback, project documentation including session plans, social media, individual project reports and a concluding discussion with the pilot project staff five months after project completion.

Signal Film and Media

Key Findings and Reflections

- Initial outreach, recruitment and environment setting is vital.
- Digital skills training content needs to be relevant, creative and hands-on.
- Need for wider measurements of softer indicators.
- Adult support networks can feel frustrated and out of their depth with technology.
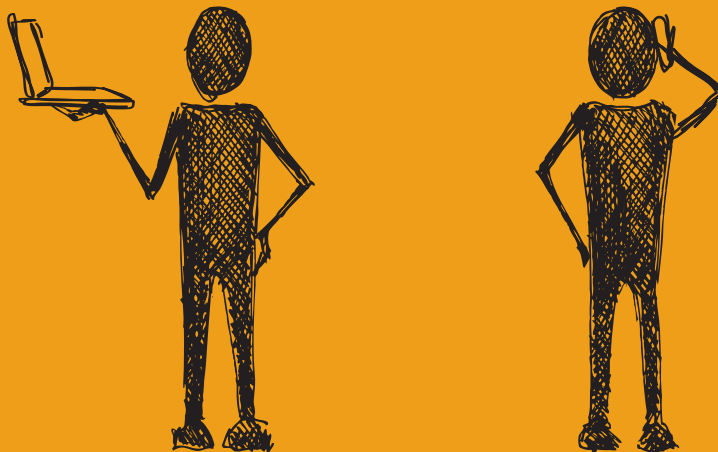
Project: #NotWithoutMe
Organisation: Signal Film and Media

Founded in 2008 by two local young female graduates, Signal Film and Media is a registered charity delivering high-quality film and digital media projects in welcoming, inclusive purpose built studios. Based in the heart of a deprived community in Barrow-in-Furness in Cumbria, the company promotes digital inclusion as an essential part of social inclusion and uses creative digital media as a catalyst for personal and social change, as well as artistic development. Extensive development work has been carried out with deprived communities and marginalised, vulnerable groups through the delivery of training courses, workshops, participatory productions, exhibitions and events alongside producing high-quality professional productions.

Location: Barrow-in-Furness, North West England. Sessions were carried out in Signal's studio located within a local film, media and arts centre in Barrow and at a young people's residential unit.

Young people worked with: five young people currently in care, four care leavers and six young people on the cusp of care or already receiving respite care.[40] The project also ran sessions with 10 care workers and 3 foster parents. A final screening and workshop ran with 14 individuals from eight external organisations.

40 These are a group of young people who are not permanently based in a residential unit, who still predominantly live with their families but may also be receiving respite care within a residential unit on a temporary basis.

Main barriers to digital inclusion cited by Signal[41]

Independent evidence shows that digital inclusion is key to social inclusion. Vulnerable young people in Barrow risk becoming isolated digitally as well as by geography and social/economic deprivation. Digital inclusion is far more than being connected to broadband. The main barrier is a lack of incentive to use digital media for more than a limited range of social interactions. There is a lack of appreciation of the practical benefits that digital skills can bring – finding a recipe, paying a bill, registering with a doctor, applying for benefits or a job, keeping in touch with carers. There is often a lack of digital confidence in care staff and foster carers and a concern that 'online' is not a safe space for young people. Additionally, there is sometimes a disconnect between youth organisations and online centres which can promote and support safe access to digital skills and resources; eg libraries, arts/community organisations.

41 The Signal team have experience working with a variety of different vulnerable groups including care experienced young people. For the #NotWithoutMe project they chose to focus specifically on working with a new group of care experienced young people, as they saw a gap in provision.

Aim

To offer young people leaving care access to information, technology and support as they start out in their independent life. The project also aimed to improve carers and foster parents' understanding of the importance of digital skills for developing independence and inclusivity for care-leavers.

Intended Outcomes

1. Young care leavers increase and improve their digital skills and their confidence through being part of a digital world.
2. Foster Parents and Care Workers improve their understanding of the importance of digital skills for developing independence and inclusivity for care leavers and understand how best they can learn and use digital skills.
3. Organisations working with vulnerable young people set up programmes to ensure all young care leavers have the basic digital skills they need to thrive.

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Project Duration

The project delivered 19 sessions with young people which ran from April 2016 to January 2017 and two workshops with adults.

- Eight weekly group sessions run at the Signal Film studio.
- Seven sessions run weekly with a different group of young women at a local residential unit.
- Four one-to-one sessions for one individual to explore his own project.
- One 'Adult Digital Help' workshop for carers and foster parents who were supporting the young people involved in the project.
- Final celebration screening event and workshop for eight outside organisations.
- Two additional film screenings with local groups.

Staff Support

Primarily, two members of staff were involved – the project lead and a tutor. If the task was technical, they would be joined by a tech assistant. All the staff are trained in working with and safeguarding vulnerable adults and vulnerable young people. An external tutor was brought in to deliver the workshops with adults.

Evaluation methods

Startpoint and endpoint baseline surveys, a register of attendance, tutor observations, video diary interviews, focus group meetings, one-to-one meetings (recorded through audio), photos and work produced.

Project Outline

The project started with a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify all the key groups to be involved with the project. The primary stakeholders (those experiencing significant change or contributing in a significant way to the project) were identified as: young care leavers (course participants), foster parents, care workers and a number of outside organisations interested in improving their understanding of young people's digital skills.

Local care providers identified care experienced young people who wanted to learn or improve their digital skills. The initial process of recruitment proved quite challenging, as the planned group had dispersed in the time between the funding application and the project start. The new recruitment process was successful, but only in engaging boys in the initial stages. To curate a better gender balance, Signal staff members liaised more closely with the two residential units in the area in order to recruit some girls. Some of the young people then attended training sessions at Signal's studio, which offers a variety of high-spec digital equipment. However, it is important to note that some young people did not want to attend sessions without their carer's participation, so ensuring the environment could incorporate the carers was key. Rather than hosting all of the sessions in their studios, Signal had to undertake a number of outreach activities with young people in their own environments to build trust and good relationships.

The young people were supported through an eight-week course to develop their digital skills, online behaviours and a variety of soft skills. Topics have included online mind-mapping, being safe online, downloading and saving files, interview skills, presenting and speaking skills, and vlogging.[42] The weekly workshops began with a conversation between young people and their carers on what they individually use the Internet for. The tutor introduced a mind-map tool, which helped the young people organise their thoughts into a visual online medium and really sparked discussion. This session was designed to be very relaxed, to allow the tutor to understand what the

42 Vlogging or video-blog is a method of blogging recorded using a video format rather than in written format.

young people wanted to get out of the project and gave Signal the opportunity to suggest activities that could be planned in. The Signal team were keen to make it clear that the sessions were flexible and open to change if the young people's interests or motivations developed.

The subsequent workshops allowed the young people get to grips with a variety of digital skills including being safe online, downloading, saving and editing found content. One workshop gave the group the chance to record an interview with a real film crew. They took time to plan and prepare their questions with their care workers, learning about the different film crew roles at the same time.

In total, three films were produced by the young people, each exploring a different digital topic and there were four screenings of the films. This included a screening with eight outside organisations including the local Youth Offending team, Children's Services and charitable trusts that support young people in the area. This event was hosted to improve their organisational awareness and understanding of basic digital skills with relation to young people. A digital tutor gave a talk to the organisations to discuss the idea of digital media as a tool for people, attempting to break down the barriers that the different generations face. The screening also included a discussion around 'valuable skills' development, as many of the organisations were surprised by the high level of video-based internet traffic, highlighting video production skills as a highly valid employment skill.

Signal were aware that adults who worked with the young people in their project seemed frustrated with the technologies that the young people were using, and particularly the amount time devoted to using devices. The Signal team felt it would be beneficial for the adults and the young people if they also undertook some work with the adults. This would ensure they were equipped with basic digital skills and improve their online knowledge, and give the adults the power to start believing in the importance of digital skills to provide positive improvements in long-term wellbeing.

Therefore, Signal also ran a one-day workshop with carers, support workers and foster parents to develop their understanding of the importance of digital skills for independence of young people, and explore some of the challenges facing young people in care. The CPD training focused specifically on the promotion of the internet being a positive tool in the lives of young people. The training geared towards increasing basic digital skills knowledge to break down daunting barriers facing carers and foster parents, by introducing them to a breadth of social media and networking platform used by young people and exploring their key areas of concerns with relation to safety, privacy and positive wellbeing.

Outputs

- Given the initial challenges around recruitment, the number of sessions increased from the initial aim of eight to a total of 19. This included:
  - Eight weekly drop-in workshops with seven young people where the main film was produced,
  - Four one-to-one sessions for one individual to explore his own project
  - Seven outreach sessions for a group of seven young women who would not come to the weekly workshops, run at their residential unit.
- In total 15 young people were engaged with the project.

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- Three films were produced:
  - #NotWithoutMe (short film/vlog) – shot by the weekly group sessions which focuses on 'top internet tips and tricks for adults to understand the support needed by young people'.
  - 'Cat and dog fishing' – short film about the problems with dating online – made with participants from the Children's Home, plus a video produced during the initial workshop.
  - A rap video by one of the participants about his life in care and experiences as a care leaver.
- Four film screenings.
- One 'Adult Digital Help' workshop for carers and foster parents.
- A website showcasing the whole project. www.signalfilmsnotwithoutme.wordpress.com.

Findings and Reflections
- Initial outreach, recruitment and environment setting is vital.
- Digital skills training content needs to be relevant, creative and hands-on
- Need for wider measurements of softer indicators
- Adult support networks can feel frustrated and out of their depth with technology.

> The positive outcomes of this #NotWithoutMe project have superseded our expectations. The young people involved have developed great relationships with positive role models, worked towards developing their own digital skills whilst gaining more confidence in being part of the digital world.
>
> **SIGNAL FINAL REPORT**

Greg[43] – the rap artist

One of the young people involved with the Signal project was Greg, who was initially a reluctant participant.

'It turned out that he [Greg] writes these amazing raps but he's never really done it publicly or had it filmed or anything so he was really excited about making the music video. He really would come in on his own time and help out on it when he was editing it. He did the writing and the music and then somebody filmed it for him, but he was still very active and involved in the creative process… The way that he engaged with the project, and his care worker said as well, was amazing that he has never really done anything like that before and it really took him out of his normal daily life and it was a really big step for him to do that and his level of involvement they thought was remarkable. He has since come to stuff and been in to see us as well independently. He went to session of another youth project that we run which again was massive for him… Just the way he talks about, the way he talks about it is as if it has been life changing for him. I'm not 100% of the facts of how his life has changed, but the way he talks about it is completely different to when he first came and didn't look like he would ever come again.'

SIGNAL STAFF

'I'm proud of my film and think it's great. When I'm better I'd like to get help with my ideas, but I need someone chilled out who can help me do it, I cannot do much myself. I look forward to coming here, it's not like anywhere else in Barrow, I'm allowed to do creative things instead of rotting away'

GREG, SIGNAL PARTICIPANT

43 Name changed.

Initial outreach, recruitment and environment setting is vital

> "We couldn't just run these weekly sessions where people came to us, so that's when we decided to go to the actual homes and take our project there"
>
> **SIGNAL STAFF**

The Signal team had some initial challenges in finding young people to work with on this project: **"It was a bit harder than we had anticipated to recruit and we changed the way that we worked"** – Signal staff. They realised they could not advertise the programme through their usual channels as they specifically wanted to work with care experienced young people, and they knew that they were not likely to come forward on their own. They had to utilise their existing relationships with care workers and foster carers to identify young people to work with. Signal had initially aimed the project at young people in care or leaving care, but a strong case was made by one of their existing partner organisations that younger people on the cusp of care were just as vulnerable and in need of extra resources. This gave Signal the motivation to widen the recruitment to include young people on the cusp of care who are still living at home. In total, Signal worked with 15 young people with different experiences of the care system.

This initial stage of the programme also provided Signal a number of new insights in working with different types of young people. Most of Signal's work takes place at their studio in Barrow, however they realised this was not an appropriate delivery method for one of the groups they were working with. The Signal team amended their approach and instead went to the young people's environment and delivered the sessions at their residential unit. **"They** [the group of 7 young women based at the residential unit] **came to us for one session and they had a really great time and they came with their care workers, but they just did not come again, they just physically did not come back to our studios, we hadn't really experienced it before because a lot of young people do, so at this stage we did realise that we just had to go to their space"** – Signal staff.

This lack of consistent engagement is a common feature of working with vulnerable young people. The Signal team also had to appreciate and cater for the fact that the young people lived very unpredictable lives, **"They just seemed to have erratic lifestyles, some people would get moved and disappear"** – Signal staff.

The Signal team also had to rethink the size of group they were intending on working with. They had initially wanted to work with a greater number of young people, but realised given the complexity of the needs of these particular young people that they needed to change tact. They reframed the approach and decided to host fewer people per group so that they could offer more tailored support to each person: **"Small groups are good for the digital stuff and another reason why we always have at least two tutors in there and, possibly, the tech assistant as well"** – Signal staff.

The Signal team also ensured that their first session was very informal and relaxed. They had to adapt how they would usually deliver learnings with young people and had to slow the content down: **"We do the smaller steps, the cups of tea the chats about their favourite films or sharing fun times before you actually start"** – Signal staff. They also paid attention to creating friendly and accessible environments for the young people, and in some cases, this included their support network: **"Some** [young people] **don't want their care workers there and want a break, but that group did want their care workers there, so it's about being open"** – Signal staff.

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Digital skills training content needs to be relevant, creative and hands-on

Discovering young people's interests in vlogging and presenting their online content, worked well to enhance their digital strengths and work produced and video evidence can work together to illustrate and record change

SIGNAL STAFF

Initially, the Signal staff found it difficult to capture the interest of some of the young people. **"We found they were not engaging until 'Hollyoaks' was brought up in conversation"** – Signal staff.

The Signal team thought outside the box to engage the group and created a video presented by ex-Hollyoaks director Eddy Marshall who urged the young people to get involved with the project. After this, the girls became interested and agreed to join a workshop which took place at the residential unit. The initial workshop was a taster to allow them to get excited about creating digital media content.

Signal also quickly recognised the different levels of digital skills within the group: **"They were definitely different abilities and that goes for the adults as well as the young people"** – Signal staff.

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Some participants knew and shared their knowledge of how to complete given tasks, whereas others found using the devices more difficult to use. Contrary to some experiences, all the young people mentioned that they used tablets, laptops and phones on a regular basis. They used their personal devices for a variety of purposes, including revising for school for instance, although some activity noted was recognised as being potentially harmful.

One of the exercises the young people took part in involved them working with a real film crew. This proved a very engaging and useful exercise as the young people had to behave in a professional manner and understand the importance of patience and listening. The group also made a vlog using a green-screen background.[44] This exercise allowed the participants a unique opportunity to present to camera and helped to significantly develop their speaking skills and confidence. One of the young people noted in an interview about the project that he has: **"Begun to realise how developing a wider digital skillset can open up more opportunities and hits the outcome of being more confident with the digital world"** – Signal participant.

This project has also already delivered an important legacy. In light of the success of Signal's #NotWithoutMe project and the solid relationship they have built with key partners, the local authority's Children's Services team requested Signal to work with them on a project for 8-11s on the cusp of care or already receiving respite care. The project has been funded by BBC Children in Need. Signal have also received support from the Police Crime Commissioner to work on one-to-one cases, as a result to the innovative work carried out through the #NotWithoutMe project.

44 Green-screen is a technology that allows the user to superimpose other images on the background easily. The participants used the technology to show examples of popular websites and key privacy and safety tools.

Need for a variety of measurement tools and indicators

> Before a young person can start to think about achieving their full potential, they need to feel some sense of safety, belongingness and esteem
>
> **SIGNAL FINAL REPORT**

The Signal staff closely followed the Government's Digital Inclusion Outcomes Framework when recording and measuring their results. They noted many useful features of the process including utilising online tools for collecting survey results, privacy and anonymity when recording responses. They have continued to use several of the tools and adopted a similar layout for future reports as they found it to look and read professionally. However, they also noted that the framework could benefit from increased flexibility. **"It was really useful but I think it needs to be adaptable... I think there are bits in it that are really useful, but you know all projects are different and I think what we have been doing recently is picking and choosing bits out of it... It has definitely informed some of our future work"** – Signal staff.

Signal also learnt during the process that the measurement scales were important. Work in this area can develop slowly and changes may be incremental, so a larger range of responses on a scale is beneficial for highlighting the smaller changes.

Collecting survey data also presented challenges for the Signal team who found it difficult to gain consistent feedback from the young people they were working with. They may not have attended all of the sessions or may have been reluctant to complete a form. The staff found that collecting verbal feedback was a more effective method for gathering evidence. Signal highlighted that tutor observations were also paramount to witnessing improvements in confidence or skills in the young people they were working with. These may have been very small steps that the young people were not necessarily aware of or chose not to divulge.

Signal also found that alternative forms of progression measurement were also important

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> "When the young people who are in this situation where they absolutely do not want to engage with anything – and other organisations in Barrow have a similar experiences where you have to go to their home and they won't answer the door and they won't come out of their bedroom – so then to actually do this project where they not only come out of their bedroom (and that is one amazing outcome) they actually start writing a story and then staring in film. Just even those things that those girls did are quite amazing"
>
> **SIGNAL STAFF**

to record. For example, at the end of the second session three young people asked the delivery tutors to allow them to have a video camera to take home to film additional content for the vlogs they were creating. This was allowed on a number of occasions, and was regarded by the team as an important indicator of change as it showed a high level of engagement and interest in a project that there was initially limited enthusiasm for. One of the young people even asked to record himself introducing the #NotWithoutMe film created through the project so that he could have it on his own YouTube account. This shows a meaningful development within this project, where participants have begun to realise and reap the benefits of producing positive online content.

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The Signal team struggled at times with how to best record these qualitative changes. They suggest that simplifying indicators within evaluation data could make surveys less formal with self-reporting forms, with measures such as 'feeling happy to be involved,' or report feeling 'proud of themselves' or feeling 'that they accomplished trying something new'. **"The main outcomes which we usually see are increases in confidence and social skills… a lot of the work that we do here is around the positive use of the internet and digital media and how you can use it as a force for interesting meaningful things as opposed to the negative… People doing something positive and getting out of their negative headspace for a certain amount of time is really beneficial for people"** – Signal staff

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Adult support networks can feel frustrated and out of their depth with technology

'There's no access for parents to get help for themselves and then to teach their children and help them.'

CARE WORKER AND PARTICIPANT OF THE SIGNAL WORKSHOP

When the Signal team reflected on what they would change if they were to run the project again, they noted they would: **"Work more with the adults and the foster carers at the beginning** [of the project] **and get them involved in the delivery as well"** – Signal staff.

The importance of working with adults involved in the lives of the young people, as well as directly with the young people, was a key learning of the #NotWithoutMe project for the Signal team. 'Distress' and 'frustration' was apparent to the Signal team when they first worked with the adults, with many of the workers who were supporting vulnerable young people citing that they had a lack of control or ability to support the young people to be safe online. Signal recognised there was a lot of apprehension

within support organisations about young people using technology; and that one of the solutions currently employed by some of the residential units is to restrict access to digital technology for vulnerable young people: **"There's all the scary stuff you hear, that it's** [technology] **all awful and I think in some of the cases they might ban some of the young people from having their phones at night which may have a negative effect, so it more about knowing about the risks, and if they know about the dangers, how you would approach young people"** – Signal staff.

Recognising these issues, the Signal team adapted their project plan and decided to deliver a workshop with a group of support workers and foster carers who were supporting the young people participating in the project. The Signal team noted that they were: **"Amazed at how much they [**the adults**] got out of that one day session"** – Signal staff.

The Signal team recognised they needed to focus this workshop on breaking down the stigma and fear associated with online technologies such as concerns around young people's privacy and potential for cyber bullying. The Signal team wanted to upskill the adults with knowledge around widely used social media platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram and share strategies to counter a number of their key concerns. A key aim of the workshop was to better enable the support networks to be able to: **"Communicate with their young people about their basic digital skills and what they're actually doing when they're in their bedrooms"** – Signal staff.

To deliver this training, Signal hired in a specialist trainer in online safety who had experience in designing and delivering courses aimed at adults. Around two-thirds of those who took part reported feeling more confident in talking to young people about their use digital media as a result of the session. There was also demand for further training and support, to gain more confidence and develop more hands-on, practical experience with technology.

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'I felt that I thought I knew a lot about this subject but only after the training did I realise how little I knew'

CARE WORKER AND PARTICIPANT OF THE SIGNAL WORKSHOP

'Excellent workshop, I feel that I am empowered to advise and support and in addition I can learn from the Young People that I work with. Having a wider knowledge enables me to support and advise parents, in addition educate and overcome some of the myths and fears that the older generation may previously held.'

CARE WORKER AND PARTICIPANT OF THE SIGNAL WORKSHOP

'The workshop was fantastic and it made me realise how much I didn't know and I have gained knowledge regarding privacy settings and how your information will always be there. These workshops are extremely valuable to adults.'

CARE WORKER AND PARTICIPANT OF THE SIGNAL WORKSHOP

ENTHUSE
ENGAGE
ENJOY
ENRICH

THE PAVILION

The Pavilion (Barnet)

Key Findings and Reflections

- Access to equipment is vital but can be intimidating for some young people.
- Digital work is useful to explore self, self-confidence and wellbeing.
- Digital evaluation tools need to include a wider set of softer indicators to measure outcomes.
- Teachers also need to upskill their digital skills.
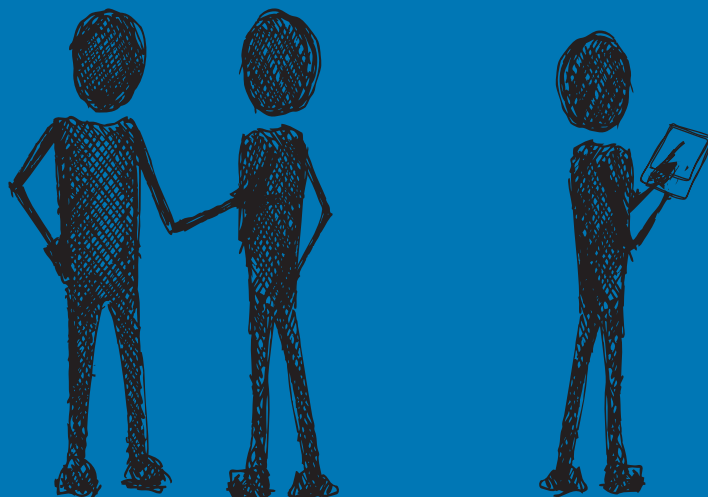
Project: #NotWithoutMe
Organisation: The Pavilion

The Pavilion is a Pupil Referral Unit in Barnet that provides flexible alternative education provision for approximately 128 students living in the area who are unable to attend mainstream education for a variety of reasons. These include permanent exclusions and children with medical conditions such acute social and school anxiety.[45] Students have a history of poor school attendance coupled with difficulties in educational and social settings. Most students are characterised by having a common lack of self-esteem and confidence, reluctance to trust and a fear of challenge. They are all vulnerable, but they are supported to raise their aspirations and move on to mainstream schools or training opportunities.

Location: Barnet (Greater London), England.

Young people worked with: 29 young people excluded from mainstream education. Two cohorts (one group of highly anxious students aged 11-16 and one group of behaviour referrals aged 11-14) in mixed age and referral pathways[46] split into four groups.

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45 This includes young people who refuse to go to school on a regular basis or have problems staying in school.
46 Routes through which young people enter The Pavilion.

Main barriers to digital inclusion for students at The Pavilion

- 'Pushed out learners' – social, emotional or behaviour needs (often undiagnosed and including mental-health concerns) which have led to broken attendance in formal education and loss of underpinning of learning thorough acquisition of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- Poverty – most (not all) have smartphones, but many live in low income households which are often overcrowded and with no access to home computer, broadband etc at home.
- Vulnerability – particularly at risk of child sexual exploitation. Pavilion students typically do not protect themselves when using social media such as using privacy settings, and many have demonstrated offending behaviour in their use of social media on mobile phones. This has included breaking both the Pavilion's regulations and the law. For some, this has resulted in permanent exclusion.
- Passive consumerism – participating in a very narrow range of social digital activities (eg gaming, chat and instant messaging) whilst missing out on positive skills development; lifelong learning opportunities and wider opportunities offered through technology.
- Limited resources in the school setting (eg: four computers and 10 laptops shared between 50 students on each of two school sites).

Project Aim
To use creative media resources to support digital inclusion and encourage empathy, understanding and peer support amongst students.

Intended Outcomes
1. Students develop a positive and relevant experience of digital media, through use of an e-learning resource made for and used by students.[47]
2. Digital skills development in managing information, communication, problem solving and creating.
3. Improved outcomes in safety, social and mental wellbeing of vulnerable students.

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47 This e-learning resource was expected to take the form of a video series.

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Project Duration
Two-hour sessions with each of the four student groups every Friday throughout three academic terms.

Staff Support
One teacher leading each of the four groups of young people.

Evaluation Methods
Questionnaires, staff observations and student testimonials.

Project Outline
The project started with a general activity matrix questionnaire[48] to find out students' current use of digital items. The most frequent digital activities engaged in by students included: watching online, downloading TV, listening to or downloading music. The least frequent digital activities (engaged in by virtually none of the students) were to write a blog and maintain a personal website. Activities involving email also scored well below the average. This starting point highlighted that the students were most engaged with entertainment content and short communications, whilst avoiding more text-based, longer forms of digital communications.

This informed the project format, as it was clear the students would likely be most responsive to creative, entertainment-based work. Therefore, the students worked in groups and collaborated to produce a series of short films, which narrate

48 Adapted from OXIS and OFCOM recommended in the UK Digital Inclusion Outcomes framework.

their experiences at The Pavilion, improving digital skills whilst reflecting on their own personal journeys. The project focused primarily on social and health outcomes through creating basic digital content.

Whilst the outcomes were discussed, the outline of the programme was kept deliberately broad, so teachers and students had to work together to determine an appropriate structure and creatively solve problems in a creative way to complete the tasks. This project formed a new way of learning for both staff and students. The groups were organised into four broad project groups: art, drama, cooking and woodlands. This represented integrated learning across the most creative subject areas in the Pavilion curriculum (art, drama, food, design and technology, photography and digital media).

The project funding also allowed new digital equipment to be purchased, including three digital cameras. Each of the groups explored creative ways to develop their digital skills using this new equipment.

The Pavilion created a specific space for the project work to take place. Each session would start with students coming in and sitting around a table to discuss what the outcomes were going to be for that day, and deciding which students would be using what equipment and the plan for recording content. The students would then carry out the activities supported by the teacher.

Each of the sessions were predominantly exploratory, involving a high degree of initiative and problem-solving techniques. Students had to work collaboratively and creatively to complete their task. The art and drama groups worked together to create and film a puppet show, with the shared narrative being based upon sharing of personal experiences. The puppets were a prop, created by the students themselves, that provided a way of accessing a shared narrative and telling the deeper story of feelings of pain, anxiety and loneliness at 'being different'. The students also studied animation through YouTube, looking at different animations and different approaches to making animation. The drama group also focused on the theme of social media and isolation.

The technical challenges were to learn:
- how to use the digital apparatus;
- how to plan and create appropriate content;
- how to share this safely with wider audiences; and
- how to put it on the school website for new students to see.

Outputs:
- The Pavilion delivered weekly workshops across a one-year period.
- In total, 29 young people were involved with at least one of the delivery sessions.
- Throughout the process many individual pieces of work were created including a number of storyboards and pieces of writing.
- Four videos were produced, one from each of the student groups. The videos were scripted, filmed, edited and produced by students. Together the videos provide a vivid and very personal insight to the young people's life at The Pavilion and cover three topics:
  - why they are here;
  - what challenges they face;
  - what they have been learning

Findings and Reflections
- Access to equipment is vital but can be intimidating for some young people.
- Digital work is useful to explore the self, self-confidence and wellbeing.
- Digital evaluation tools need to include a wider set of softer indicators to measure outcomes.
- Teachers need to upskill their digital skills.

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Access to equipment is vital but can be intimidating for some young people.

"Some of the students were able to access equipment they had never seen or had the opportunity to use before, because they are coming from backgrounds of real deprivation, so for them to have the opportunity to use a camera like that and then sit at a computer and use computer software of that nature would have been something that they would have found exciting but also challenging because it would have been outside of their usual experience"

THE PAVILION

Inequality of access to technology has been cited in many cases as a significant factor in emphasising the digital skills gap.[49] This challenge also applies to vulnerable young people. The Pavilion highlighted the importance of giving their young people physical access to new technologies: **"The project did give us some new and exciting equipment and we are very technology poor here."**

Enabling their students to learn kinaesthetically was a real success of the project and reinforced the value of hands-on activities in this field. When given the opportunity, the young people showed respect for the technology and **"got very serious about handling the equipment and making products themselves"** – The Pavilion.

The need for space for young people to experiment safely with technology was clear, and this could not be taught as effectively using traditional teaching methods.

Access to new technology also further highlighted to The Pavilion staff that not all young people are innately skilled or confident in using new technology. When the students were presented with the new equipment, still in its packaging, it was clear that: **"They had absolutely no idea what they were handling or how to use it,**

49 White, D (2013) Across the Divide: Tackling Digital Exclusion in Glasgow https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/carnegieuktrust/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2016/02/pub14550115961.pdf [accessed July 2017]
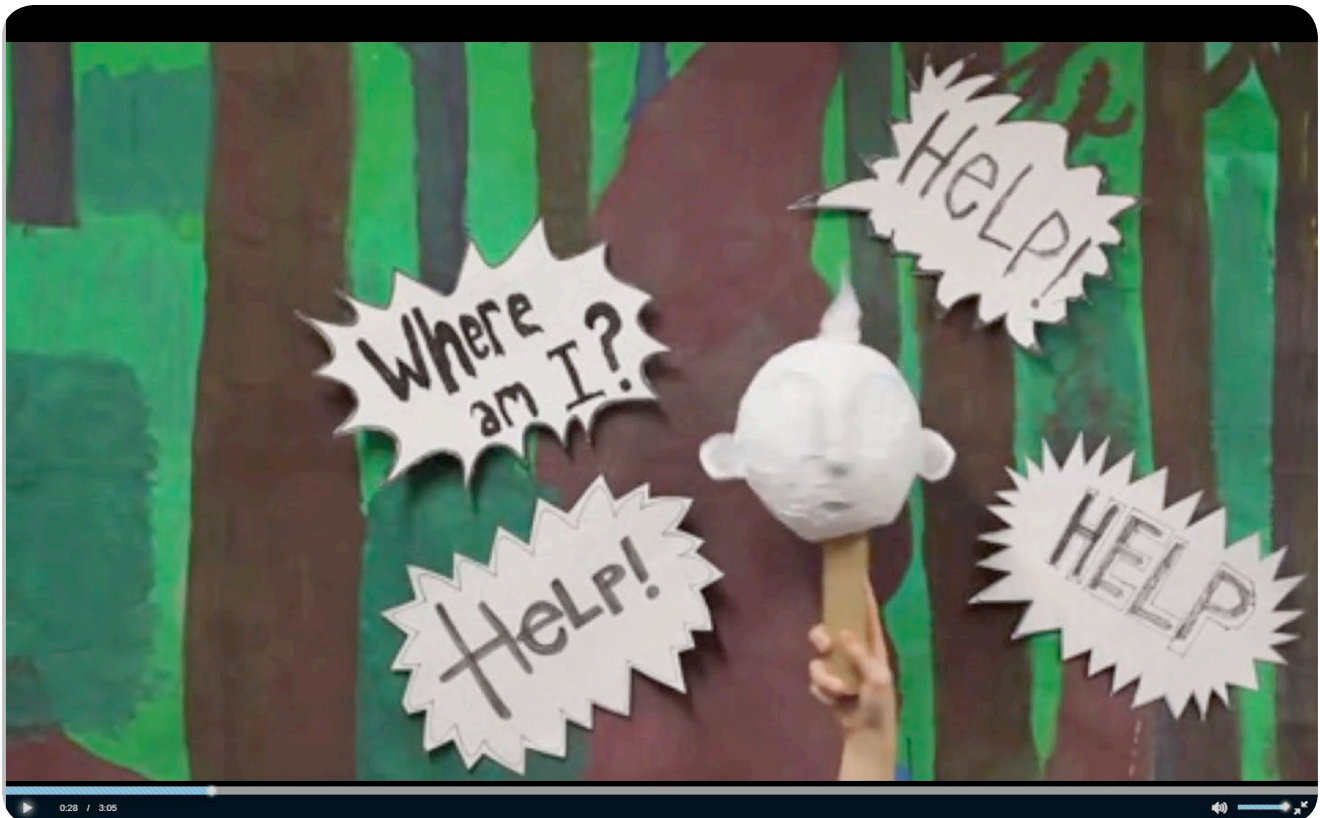
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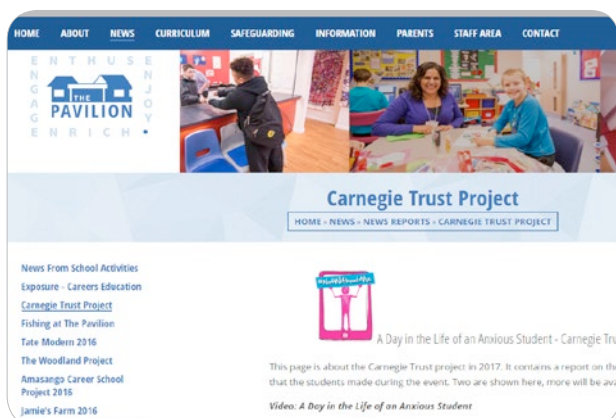but they were excited because it was a big box and you could tell it was expensive and quality. Just putting that product in their hands and them not knowing what to do with it was very evident"- The Pavilion.

Despite the lack of experience with the digital technology, the staff noted that the student presented digital skills development in a number of areas, particularly with regards to content creation, including:

- 18 students learnt how to use a digital camera very effectively – this was a success across all ages and all groups. Their skills included understanding basic camera functions, selection of correct modes, planning shots and changing lenses, use of tripod, recharging, care for the equipment.
- Seven students learnt how to plan a video shoot, including the use of a storyboard and varying shots.
- Four students learnt how to edit using iMovie. Two of these additionally learnt how to add audio and transitions.

The students valued the tangible outputs they created in terms of photographs and videos and also the digital skills they had gained in the process. The Pavilion staff noted that there may be opportunities to develop additional methods of incentivising and engagement of students. Open badges[50] or other formal certification were cited as potential useful future developments so that the young people could gain official external recognition of the work they had created and the development achieved.

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50 "Open Badges communicate skills and achievements by providing visual symbols of accomplishments packed with verifiable data and evidence that can be shared across the web" Open Badges (2016) https://openbadges.org/about/ [accessed August 2017]

Digital work is useful to explore the self, self-confidence and wellbeing

"The potential for self-esteem within this work is enormous"

THE PAVILION

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It is clear from personal testimonials and teacher observations that the students improved their digital skills and gained confidence and motivation from the project. The students also used digital appliances as a means of exploring their own wellbeing and communicating this via a digital medium. One of the key outcomes for The Pavilion's project was improved wellbeing for their students. Whilst The Pavilion had kept this outcome specifically broad, they wanted this project to support young people's sense of self and confidence. Confidence can be a real challenge for many young people in vulnerable situations[51] and The Pavilion staff noted that: **"We find our students don't have any self-belief. They might say: 'Oh, yeah I can do this' but when you present them with something they just fall apart"** – The Pavilion.

The staff were aware that this work needed to first engage with young people at the most basic level and work on building their self-esteem. The young people were able to utilise online resources to research relevant conditions such as Asperger's Syndrome and ADHD and use the internet to explore their 'labels'. Staff were able to support the young people navigate the materials they were looking at and determine which were relevant to them. The Pavilion found

51   Barnardo's, (2016) *Young people lack confidence* https://believ-einme.barnardos.org.uk/latest-news/young-people-lack-confi-dence/ [accessed June 2017]

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that working with technology in this way enabled students to have an opportunity to reflect on their personal journeys and share their thoughts, feelings and experiences in a constructive and positive manner. This digital research activity produced a number of individual pieces of work. This included a number of storyboards and one piece of writing was highlighted specifically by the staff written by young person diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, as it was an: **"Amazing description of dealing with anxiety, that went deep into themselves and thought about how they wanted to portray it all… writing about Asperger's and anxiety was a big, big journey into herself"** – The Pavilion. However, the staff note "**that the approach was more successful where students had already explored the conditions with other professionals"** rather than with students who were less familiar with the language of their diagnoses.

The Pavilion also found that the drama group wanted to focus on a specific issues of wellbeing in a digital world. "**They spent a lot of time talking about the isolation of being in the bedroom**" – The Pavilion, and eventually used the theme of "**being locked in with social media"** for their GCSE drama exam. This allowed the students to explore a number of highly relevant themes between social media and wellbeing and gave the teachers valuable insight into the daily lives of the young people they work with.

In addition to self-confidence, The Pavilion recognised early in the process, the benefit of digital work to building confidence and skills in working in teams. The project required the young people to communicate clearly to each other with regards to what they wanted to achieve,

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a skill that a number of the young people can struggle with. They were able to both learn and demonstrate clear and coherent communication in order to get successful results.

The Pavilion found that completion of the work also provided a clear sense of achievement and pride for the young people. In one particular example the staff noted, photos from the project were put on display and available to buy at a local event and the young people "**were so proud selecting which of their photos that they had taken – and it looked professional I think it was that sense that they had got quality products**" – The Pavilion.

Whilst, as previously discussed, access to the new and expensive equipment was intimidating for some young people, the implicit trust that was placed on the young people to be given the opportunity to use the technology in itself supported the young people to feel valued.

For one traumatised student, the digital camera created a breakthrough into re-engaging with learning. She was not able to sit in lessons or concentrate on her core subjects. However, she discovered the strategy of being able to participate from being behind the camera. She created an art-book of her artwork and photos and took a pride in her achievements. She was able to say:

"I enjoyed using the cameras because it is fun, entertaining and interesting and I like taking photos."

Digital evaluation tools need to include a wider set of softer indicators to measure outcomes.

"I almost wondered if, for this one [project] there needed to be a separate set of competencies, and that we could have taken a baseline and worked the students through the various skill sets and it wouldn't just be digital competencies, it would be communication ones and things like that as well"

THE PAVILION

Each of the four projects started out using the Evaluate IT framework to measure the digital inclusion progression for their groups of young people. However, given the framework's focus on quantitative measures, The Pavilion staff reported back that the framework was not always suitable to collect data on their work. The measures that were required were too advanced for much of the work undertaken by The Pavilion, which focused on the need to first engage young people with technology at the most basic level. These are young people with highly disrupted educational careers who first need to become comfortable and confident in themselves, before developing more advanced skills. "**I think we did a lot better looking at the softer outcomes… getting them to think about their behaviours, their anxiety**" **–** The Pavilion.

Teachers need upskilling with digital skills too.

"And also the staff – our skill set needed Improving."

THE PAVILION

The Pavilion's #NotWithoutMe project sessions were delivered by current teachers within The Pavilion school. Whilst devising the structure and outcomes of the project, they recognised that they, as staff, had notable skills gaps with regards to digital skills and would also require additional support in order to effectively and authentically

train the young people. To develop their digital knowledge, The Pavilion staff sought training via an external adviser with significant digital experience, to upskill them. They found this to be an extremely useful and beneficial process. **"I'm not sure if we'd have been successful if we hadn't brought a bit of James in at the beginning, we needed that"** – The Pavilion.

However, The Pavilion noted two caveats to this success. The first being that the external advisor was a friend of a teacher at the school who was able to come onto the premises and teach the project staff as a group. The project staff would not have been able to afford the time or disruption to attend an off-site, externally-run training session. However, this approach meant they were highly reliant on the trainer's expertise to guide staff and students at the beginning of the project. This could have been potentially problematic if the trainer had not had the appropriate range of digital or interpersonal skills to work with this group of young people. They also noted that even this format had its challenges, as finding a time for all the staff to meet together was unusual and required some effort to make it possible.

The Pavilion also recognised that this staff training needed to be delivered in a similar structure to that being used with the young

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people. The training needs to be hands on and exploratory to allow staff the opportunity to safely experiment with, and understand how each of the technologies and platforms work. **"We need to learn like the children – by the doing of it, just going out on a course and being told for a day isn't going to get the result"** – The Pavilion.
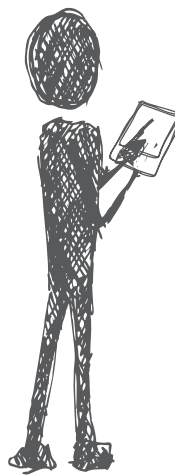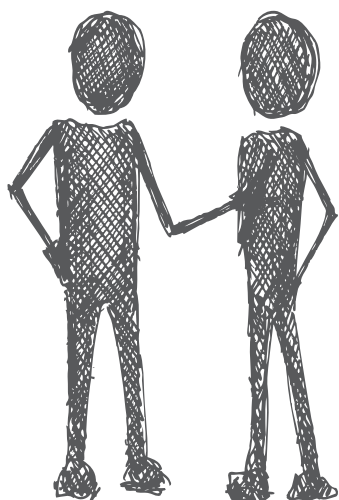
Young Scot & The Prince's Trust

Key Findings and Reflections

- Co-design is vital, and needs to be a truly two-way process.
- Flexibility and variety of content delivery is key to engagement.
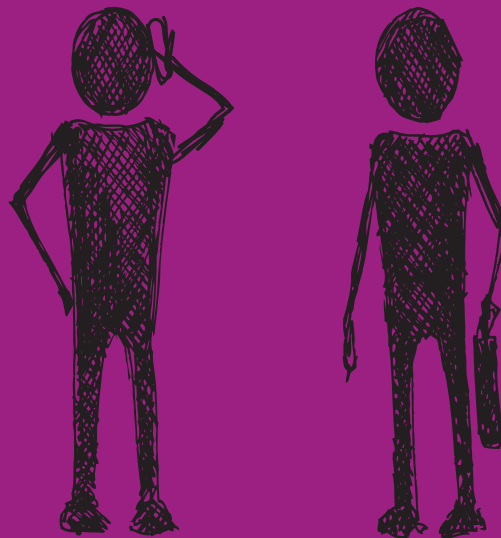- Self-reporting data collection methods are not always appropriate when working with young people.

Project: Digital Ignition
Organisations: Young Scot & The Prince's Trust

Young Scot
Young Scot is the national youth information and citizenship charity in Scotland which provides young people, aged 11-26, with a mixture of information, ideas, and incentives to help them become confident, informed and active citizens. Young Scot are leading practitioners in co-design, using a highly participative approach to support young people in Scotland in developing informed insights, ideas, recommendations and solutions for policy and practice. Young Scot is the strategic lead in Scotland for the Young Scot 5Rights Youth Commission.[52]

The Prince's Trust
The Prince's Trust works with disadvantaged young people aged 11 to 30 to build their confidence, increase their motivation and improve their employability. The Prince's Trust programmes provide personal development and employability support to unemployed young people from a range of different backgrounds – from those furthest from the labour market with multiple personal barriers (including long-term job-seekers, young parents, care leavers and ex-offenders) to those who are job ready but lack vocational skills.

Project Location: Glasgow, Scotland. Hosted within The Prince's Trust's Samsung Digital Classroom.

Young people worked with: 40 young people aged 16-25 who are not in education, training or employment. The young people had experience working with The Prince's Trust through their existing Fairbridge programme.[53] All participants were from the disadvantaged localities across the greater Glasgow area.

52 The 5Rights Framework is a set of five rights for the protection and empowerment of children on the Internet that adopts the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
53 The Fairbridge programme has been running under The Prince's Trust since 2011 and works with young people aged 16 to 25, giving them the motivation, self-confidence and skills they need to change their lives.

Main barriers to digital inclusion cited by Young Scot and The Prince's Trust
Vulnerable young people are more likely to lack basic digital skills and struggle to access education; training; employment; and enterprise opportunities.[54] This is particularly challenging for young people seeking benefits. Research from The Prince's Trust found that more than one in 10 young people do not think their computer skills are good enough to use in the job they want, whilst almost one in five unemployed young people (18%) claim to feel this way. One in 10 unemployed young people (10%) cannot send their CV online, while more than one in

six (17%) believe they would be in work today if they had better computer skills. A quarter of unemployed young people "dread" filling in online job applications and one in 10 admit they avoid using computers. This is becoming increasingly problematic as organisations, including the Department for Work and Pensions move to online support systems, rendering young people 'Digital by Default'.

Project Aim
To help vulnerable young people gain basic digital skills, with a focus on employability and understanding the connections between digital skills and how these apply to finding employment.

54 Helsper, E and Smirnova, S (2016) Slipping Through The Net https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/research-poli-cies-reports/slipping-through-the-net [accessed July 2017]

Intended Outcomes

1. Improved basic digital skills amongst disadvantaged young people.
2. Co-designed innovative online sessions, which are used to support both face-to-face and online engagement.
3. A clear methodology which can be used beyond the pilot, cascading learning into other areas.

Project Duration

- Eight full-day sessions between April and December 2016.
- Phase One: Four sessions April to July, with an August to October evaluation period.
- Phase Two: Four sessions November to December 2016. January 2017 Evaluation.

Staff Support

Five members of Young Scot staff and five members of The Prince's Trust were involved in the delivery across the eight sessions. Usually, two Young Scot staff would lead on the delivery of each session (the project lead and a staff member with topic expertise including co-design or creative content) with several team members from The Prince's Trust. Usually two to three staff members were involved in the planning of the session.

Evaluation Methods

Evaluation methods included questionnaires, feedback walls and video vox pops.[55]

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55 Short informal feedback videos. The staff were not present when these were filmed to try and gain honest feedback.

Project Outline

Digital Ignition was a two-phased co-designed project. Young Scot and The Prince's Trust wanted to design a digital skills programme that would complement The Prince's Trust's existing work with young people around employability.

> "Phase one was about idea generation and understanding where the young people are coming from and their skills. Phase two focused on developing those skills and having that hands on experience in terms of doing the things we were talking about."
> **DIGITAL IGNITION STAFF (YOUNG SCOT)**

Phase One Outline: Exploration

Phase One consisted of four co-design sessions delivered with the aim of gaining insight into young people's digital experiences, interests, current skills and confidence. It was initially intended that each of the four sessions would have the same structure delivered with four unique groups of young people. However, in reality, each session consisted of a mixed group of new participants and some who had been involved in one or more of the other sessions. As a result, the delivery approach was adapted to be more in-depth, running across four weeks instead of four discreet sessions. Young Scot and The Prince's Trust used this opportunity investigate young people's current skills and identify the themes that were important to the young people but also, in session three and four, begin to test their ideas and evaluate them ahead of the full roll out in Phase Two. Each of the sessions involved a mixture of online and 'offline' tasks such as group discussions, posters, post-it note idea collection, using search engines and creating and uploading content to social media.

The four sessions were structured as:

- Session One: Understanding young people's digital experiences, the technology they engage with on a day-to-day and infrequent basis, their current skills and their confidence in using digital skills across their lives. An example activity is provided at the end of the case study.
- Session Two: Reviewing the learning from week one, identifying key themes and

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developing draft session plans around these areas of work.

- Session Three: Review of learning from week two, testing of two session plan ideas created from key themes identified in the first two weeks: Creating online content and social media skills. The session also included evaluation on what had worked and what elements of the workshop needed improved.
- Session Four: Review of learning from week three, testing of the remaining two session plan ideas: Skills for Applying for Jobs, and Accessing Services and Opportunities Online.

Throughout Phase One four themes were identified and refined by the group as key areas where they would like to gain more digital skills: Social Media, Creating Online Content, Using Digital Skills for Job or Course Applications and Accessing Services.

Phase Two Outline: Skills Training

Phase Two was launched in November 2016 and delivered digital skills training focused on the four themes identified through the co-design process in Phase One. The sessions worked with 33 young people, some of whom had been involved in the co-design process and others were new to the programme at the delivery stage. As with Phase One, each of the sessions involved a mixture of high-tech and low-tech activities. The four day-

long sessions each covered one of the themes in detail and content included:

Session One: Social Media:
- An introduction to multiple social media channels and a discussion about what the participants use them for.
- Skills for staying safe online and setting privacy settings across platforms.

Session Two: Creating Online Content:
- What is creative online content?
- How to use the equipment (cameras/video cameras) and upload videos.
- How to use creative content to help you find job (blogs, portfolios and digital CVs).

Session Three: Using Digital Skills for Job or Course Applications:
- How to make your CV look good (Word).
- Online networking and promotion (social media).

Session Four: Accessing Services:
- Identifying the services young people want to access and how to find them (using search engines and directories).
- How to navigate online form and understanding the questions they are asking.

Outputs
- Young Scot and The Prince's Trust delivered eight interactive day-long digital skills sessions, covering a variety of content.
- This included four co-design sessions and four tailored digital workshops focused on: social media, creating online content, using digital skills for job or course applications and accessing services.
- 40 young people took part in at least one of the workshops.

Findings and Reflections
- Co-design is vital, and needs to be a truly two way process.
- Flexibility and variety of content delivery is key to engagement.
- Self-reporting data collection methods are not always appropriate when working with young people.

Co-design is vital, but needs to be a truly two-way process

"Although the young people identified the themes they wanted to focus on, it was clear to us that there are other skills that we needed to incorporate as a foundation before we move on to the more technical elements"

DIGITAL IGNITION STAFF (YOUNG SCOT)

The co-design method allowed The Prince's Trust and Young Scot to be responsive in their delivery and tailor each stage to the needs of the young people they were directly working with. The activities carried out through Phase One helped the staff to refine the workshops in terms of the digital skills the young people have; the digital skills they do not have; the digital skills they want to acquire; and the aspects of their life that those digital skills would help them to access. **"The young people self-identified the things that we anticipated we needed to tackle in the first place, including basic digital skills, soft skills, their confidence and their ability to discern good information when they are searching for information online" –** Digital Ignition Staff (Young Scot)
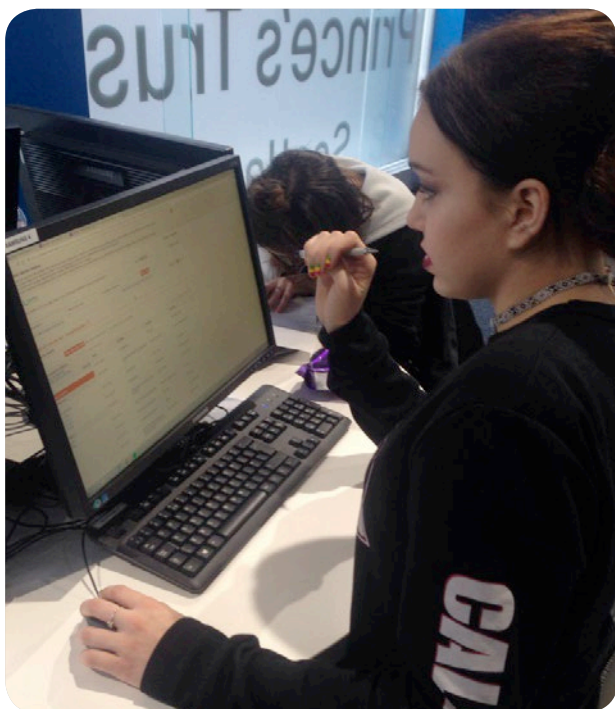
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However, the staff noted there was some tension between the skills that the young people wanted to develop, and the skills the staff believed the young people required in order to participate effectively and safely online. For example, during the social media session there were additional skills such as understanding what is meant by 'appropriate content', that needed to be included in the programme as a foundation before the tasks moved on to the more technical or creative activities.

There were also challenges concerning how to deliver a programme that was wide-reaching enough to have broad appeal, but also specific enough to meet the individual needs of group members. Again, the co-design activities helped the staff ensure that the sessions planned for Phase Two related to the young people's interests and motivations, and set the learning within a real-life context and an individual benefit. The young people needed to see the connection between the skills being taught in the session and the difference these would make to their everyday lives: **"We wanted them to really feel like it was of value and of interest to them"** – Digital Ignition Staff (Young Scot).

Allowing young people's input into the programme design helped challenge the project staff's preconceived ideas of what they felt were the pressing issues affecting young people and the skills gap they face in terms of digital. The co-design approach was effective in cementing some of the staff's informed views in terms of the digital skills the young people would be keen to develop, such as appropriate social media content. But it was also useful in highlighting areas which staff may otherwise have not considered, such as understanding how young people do, and more prominently do not, use search engines as a first route to find information. By giving young people the opportunity to not only to pick the overarching learning themes, but also design the delivery model (timings, activities, delivery styles etc.) the young people were able to create a relevant and engaging course, whilst retaining a sense of ownership over the project.

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Flexibility and variety of content delivery is key to engagement

> "The less talking from the front the better"
> **PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK**

During the co-design phase, the young people were very clear that they wanted the digital skills sessions to be interactive and fun, presentations needed to be visual rather than text heavy with as few written handouts as possible. They also indicted that they did not want long sessions unless they included a variety of activities. The Young Scot and Prince's Trust team reflected that for future projects it would perhaps be suitable to deliver a greater number of shorter sessions, addressing specific skills instead of only four workshops that looked to cover a number of skills areas within each.

The young people also highlighted their preference for hands-on sessions where they could learn by doing and exploring simultaneously. This activity-driven approach to the project required fewer written instructions as most of the training was delivered verbally, allowing the staff to more easily manage challenges around poor literacy, "**an issue that permeated all areas of activity" –** Digital Ignition Staff (Young Scot)

The young people also responded positively to being set challenges and tasks. The staff noted that teamwork and 'friendly competition' appeared to be successful approaches for learning for this group and subject . "**Peer support was a big thing. A lot of the young people knew each other [**from other Prince's Trust activities] **and supported each other" –** Digital Ignition Staff (Young Scot).

Despite the focus on digital skills development, the project also allowed Young Scot and The Prince's Trust to help the young people gain additional soft skills throughout the process. The young people had the opportunity to develop their skills in leadership, problem solving, creative thinking and time management.

Skills baselines established through self-report data may not be fully accurate

"The digital confidence that they portrayed wasn't actually there in terms of skills and know-how"

DIGITAL IGNITION STAFF (YOUNG SCOT)

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During the first stage of the process Young Scot and The Prince's Trust were able to gauge the young people's skills and knowledge through predominantly self-report methods including surveys and verbal feedback. From this data collection, more than half the group stated they were confident in using digital technology, however the project staff noted that aside from passively consuming entertainment media and engaging with social media, this appeared not to be the case. "**The majority of the attendees struggled with basic use of search engines, how to find information and identify reliable information or with applications such as Microsoft Word and using email**" – Digital Ignition Staff (Young Scot).

Throughout the initial co-design sessions, it became apparent that many of the areas the young people stated confidence in, were in fact areas where they lacked the necessary skills needed to navigate technology safely and appropriately. Therefore, the project team partly shifted focus of the sessions to increasing
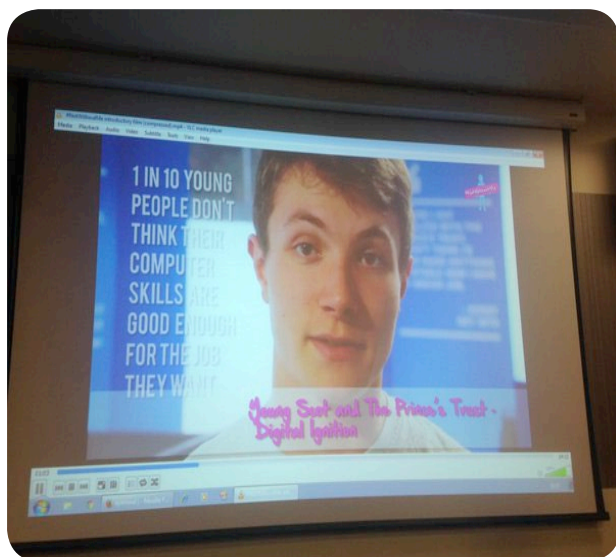
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their understanding of this over-reporting and exploring strategies to overcome the young people's perception of their skills versus the reality. As a result, The Prince's Trust and Young Scot had to: **"Reset the level we pitched the programme at. In some cases we had to make it more specific, in some cases we has to make it more clear, in some cases we had to take it back a few steps and make it more basic"** – Digital Ignition Staff (Young Scot).

The staff also adapted the programme to focus on some of the underpinning training. For example, when conducting the 'Accessing Online Services' workshop, rather than start with the search element, they began with the questions of: 'What do we mean by services and what difference does that make to their lives?'. This approach produced highly encouraging results. Initially, 43% of the young people said they did not know what we meant by services however, following the session, 100% said they felt more confident searching for online services.

Given the challenges that Young Scot and The Prince's Trust team had with self-report data, they were mindful of how else they could record data. They found tutor observations to be invaluable, but found part of the learning for the staff was how to record anecdotal information when they were seeing it live, so the learnings were not forgotten. The staff have continued to reflect on this approach since the end of the project, for inclusion within their wider portfolio of projects.

Young Scot and The Prince's Trust Co-Design Activity Example:

One of the activities that Young Scot and The Prince's Trust carried out in the first workshop was designed to allow the staff to better understand the daily lives of the young people they were working with.

'The task involved getting into groups and to have a think about "a day in the life'. What does their life look like in terms of where they go, who they meet, who do they communicate with? They would then also think about how technology plays a part in their world.

'Whether this included a phone or tablet or computer or maybe no access to that at all, how does that impact on their friendships, where do they go in terms of accessing services and travelling around, coming to The Prince's Trust to take part in other courses, to help us build up a bit of a picture of what young people's engagement with the digital world looks like? We didn't want to make any assumptions throughout this project that young people are digital natives and thrive in this world, so we wanted **them** to tell us their experiences. So we delivered an activity where they mapped their experiences. From that, we got them to identify the different types of digital skills that they use or that they feel they're good at (also the skills they feel they could be better) that they use on a day-to-day basis. Part of that was helping them to understand that for all of these activities they're using skills, they maybe just don't recognise it. This formed the basis of our understanding for the project.

'From there, we delivered an activity about their future digital world. We asked them to think about the things that they maybe can't access just now, or that they don't access that they would like to. We also helped them to think about what skills would they need to help them to do that. These could be around finding a job, opening an online bank account, or trying to buy train tickets to get from A to B, or even trying to find out what courses The Prince's Trust are offering at the moment. Through this, we aimed to ensure the content of Digital Ignition was going to be relevant and interesting.

'Once the young people had identified some of the services that they wanted digital skills to help them access, we conducted some testing. We worked with the young people to go onto some of the websites, try navigating these and find out how easy and accessible they were. Again, we didn't want to assume that a young person has the skills or the understanding to do these things. This is where a lot of our additional learning really came to the surface about their skills. Initially a many in the group said that they felt very confident doing these tasks, but very quickly we were able to observe that many of them didn't have sufficient skills or confidence.

'For many of us [project staff] if we needed to find something, the first thing we would do is go onto Google, but for a lot of the young people that just wasn't something that crossed their minds. They would ask the receptionist [at The Prince's Trust] or will ask around amongst their peers. All of that is really valuable but it showed that the digital confidence that they portrayed wasn't actually there in terms of skills and know-how.'

DIGITAL IGNITION STAFF (YOUNG SCOT)

These tasks shaped the delivery for Phase Two and helped the project team to reset the level we pitched much of the programme at. In some cases, the team noted they had to make activities more specific or clearer, in other cases they had to take it back a few steps and actually make it more basic than they initially were going to make it. They recognised that they needed to not just teach the young people how to use digital, but give them the skills that underpin this activity and give them the confidence to do that.

mencap
The voice of learning disability

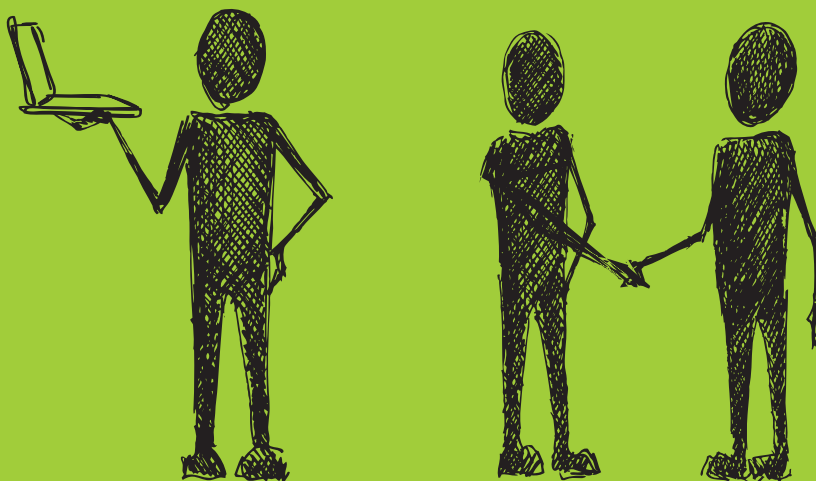# Mencap in Northern Ireland

Key Findings and Reflections

- Shorter project timescales are less effective to deliver significant digital change.
- Challenges of managing a group with very diverse abilities and interests.
- Difficulties in educating young people about 'purposeful' digital skills.
- Need for more appreciation that young people with learning disabilities can take part in digital projects.

Project: #WhatAboutMeNI
Organisation: Mencap in Northern Ireland

Mencap is the leading UK charity for people with a learning disability and their families. Mencap defines learning disability as a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities, which affects someone for their entire life. Mencap's vision is for a world where people with a learning disability are valued equally, listened to and included. Mencap wants everyone to have the opportunity to achieve the things they want, striving to promote change on three levels:

- To change society's attitude and culture
- To influence people who shape policy and practice
- To empower and directly support more individuals to live fulfilled lives

Location: Belfast & County Fermanagh. The project used the Mencap Centre in Belfast and the venues of local community-based organisations.

Young people worked with: 16 young people with a learning disability aged 12-26. Eight of these young people were located in Belfast and eight based in County Fermanagh. Mencap has existing relationships with the young people from previous activities, but they were all specifically identified to take part in this project.

Main barriers to digital inclusion cited by Mencap based on their experience working with young people with learning disabilities

Digital media and social networking are now an integral part of modern life, yet the delivery of Mencap's LiveNet[56] project had highlighted that young people with learning disabilities are less exposed to using it than their non-disabled peers, and more likely to be vulnerable to inappropriate use, bullying and scamming when they do. Their challenges in using digital technology leave them at risk of social exclusion and cyber-bulling. People with a learning disability are particularly vulnerable to bullying, with nine out of 10 children and adults with a learning disability reporting that they have been the target of some form of bullying. The growing use of ICT has created an additional avenue for this to take place. Furthermore, the rapidly evolving pace of digital technology is such that any digital skills that young people do acquire can quickly become redundant, as new gadgets or software replace those that they are familiar with. Transferring learning from one situation to another is a particular challenge for young people with a learning disability, requiring them to develop and test out potential solutions to new problems, rather than repeating behaviours they have previously learned. Equipping young people who have a learning disability with digital skills in a way that enables them to adapt to the emerging technology, while developing their understanding of e-safety and appropriate use of technology, is therefore essential to enable them to:

- Participate fully in modern life
- Connect with their peers and with wider society
- Harness the potential of technology to improve their lives.

Project aim

To support young people exploring digital technology, learning and sharing skills and developing tools to help others learn about digital technology.

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56 The LiveNet project was launched by Mencap in Northern Ireland in 2010, and was designed to help people with a learning disability to develop the skills and knowledge to use information and communications technology (ICT) in everyday life. It was a joint initiative between Mencap, Citizens Online, BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT and BCS – IT Can Help programme and was funded with a grant from the Big Lottery Fund's Live and Learn programme.

Intended Outcomes

1. 15-20 young PWLD to develop basic digital skills and capacity to adapt to developing technology, as well as knowledge and understanding of e-safety and appropriate use of technology.
2. 15-20 young PWLD to develop skills and experience in using and developing digital learning resources.
3. 15-20 young PWLD to create their own learning resource for young people, to be hosted on the LiveNet website, using digital media of their choice (video, animation, music track).

Project Duration

One two-hour evening session once a fortnight over a one-year period, allowing for school holiday breaks. In total, the project ran around 20 sessions in each of the two locations.

Staff Support

One trained Mencap youth worker per group with the support of one or two volunteers. (This included one volunteer in Belfast who was a young person who had a learning disability himself, but who volunteered and supported the group in delivering some of the sessions).

Evaluation Methods

Group interviews and testimonials.

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Project Outline

To kick off the project, both groups went on a residential weekend in Tullymore National Outdoor Centre. This gave the young people an opportunity to socialise and develop friendships before starting the project, so they would be more comfortable with the other young people in the group. It also allowed for an opportunity to generate ideas for what the young people wanted to do during the project.

The youth workers were then able to develop session plans to structure each of the fortnightly meetings that ran over a one-year period to focus on specific topics and themes. The sessions were designed to be interactive and relaxed to best support the learning for the young people and the aim was for the sessions to **"be youth led as much as we could possibly make them."** – (Mencap Youth Worker).

The workshops followed a similar format:
- Lead-in time of around 10 to 15 minutes to get set up and allow the young people to feel comfortable in their environment.
- Activities for that session, which varied each fortnight depending on the topic, with a short break in the middle.
- Each week would also include wind-down time at the end of the night to reflect on what the young people had done. This was an opportunity to discuss if there was anything they would like to cover in the next session so that staff could try to fit it within the session plan and the objectives for the overall project.

For one of the tasks, the young people set up a blog page to share their thoughts, ideas and skills. During each session, the young people would update the blogs with news about what they were doing and how they were progressing.

Other activities the Fermanagh group were involved in included the group mapping out storyboards and Google searching images that matched their stories. They took part in World Safer Internet Day 2016 by creating their own safer internet messages and sharing them online through @SID2016 #Shareaheart on Twitter and the Mencap Youth Forum Facebook page. One of the young people made a video to share

his message. The young people also worked on creating a video game idea 'Hackers from Above'. The game depicted an old computer offering 'wise words' on e-safety but being ignored by a group of young people using shiny new tablets, which ultimately proved to have a number of viruses and needed to be saved by the older computer. The group decided they wanted to explore the possibilities of having the game created, so the Mencap staff contacted a computer science lecturer at one of the local colleges. The lecturer proposed it to one of his classes and two of the local college students are now undertaking this development work as a summer project.

The Belfast group built on their digital technology skills. They created a number of blogs on friendships and relationships for Learning Disability Week. They also designed and produced a comic book for young people about the effects of cyber-bullying. As a result of the young people's involvement in #WhatAboutMeNI, this group was offered the chance to get involved in making a film about learning disability, with Into Film.[57] Into Film worked with the young people to develop their skills relating to blogging, vlogging and using YouTube to demonstrate how they could use digital film as a medium to highlight their issues and experiences. The group went on to create a short film titled 'My Not So Ordinary Life', which explored their lives as young people living with learning disabilities. **"The young people did all the sound, the direction, the storyboarding, the casting and all the camera work. Into Film just brought in a director and the professional film making kit"** – Mencap Youth Worker.

The film won a national prize at the Into Film awards and two young people had the opportunity to do a radio interview talking about the project.

Representatives from both groups of young people were able to take part in an event in the Google Foundry Dublin, showcasing their work

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57   Into Film is a national charity helping to support teachers and educators to achieve a wide range of effective learning outcomes in their use of film, to support young people's academic, cultural, and social development.

© Mencap

ideas to a number of senior youth workers, policy makers and digital professionals from across the island of Ireland. The young people had a tour the Google premises and with it gained tips for developing some new and creative ideas. Mencap staff spent a lot of time with the young people preparing them for the event so that they were comfortable and confident to present their work and engage with the professionals.

Outputs
- @WAMNI (What About Me NI) Twitter channel with content created by the young people.
- A blog page with a number of blog entries on different digital topics.
- A comic book strip focused on digital safety.
- A film about the dangers of playing Pokemon Go!
- A quiz on online safety.
- A computer game: 'Hackers From Above'
- Event at Google Foundry to showcase ideas.
- Links with other digital creative media organisations such as Into Film.

Findings and Reflections
- Shorter project timescales are less effective to deliver significant digital change.
- Challenges of managing a group with very diverse abilities and interests.
- Difficulties in educating young people about 'purposeful' digital skills.
- Need for more appreciation that young people with learning disabilities can take part in digital projects.

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Shorter project timescales are less effective to deliver significant digital change

"The timeframe of this project was a bit of a challenge, because the pace at which some of the young people work is much, much slower, you are trying to move them, and sometimes I think we try to move them on maybe sooner than we should have"

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The #NotWithoutMe project was funded on a 12-month basis from January 2016 to January 2017. However, this structure presented a significant challenge to the Mencap team and the young people they are working with, as "**12 month pieces of work for this group of young people is just too fast a pace, moving them too fast**" – Mencap Youth Worker.

The process for delivering this work involved identifying suitable young people to work with, session planning, delivery and evaluation and each stage takes time and resource to deliver.

The Mencap team cite having a suitable amount of lead in time[58] to ensure a successful

process for identifying and understanding the skills of the participants as hugely important. A designated lead-in time allows the opportunity for an appropriate amount of young people to be involved in the project. Whilst Mencap has significant experience working with young people, identifying young people to take part in specific projects still requires a time investment.

Digital projects need to balance including enough people to allow for the peer support elements to be effective, but not including too many young people so they do not receive an appropriate level of support. In terms of content delivery, the Mencap team reflected that longer project lengths also allow for a more in-depth understanding of each young person's particular starting point, as more one-to-one work can be built into the beginning of each project. This would enable the project team time to amend their session plans to make sure that all the young people are getting out of it what they want and need, and the Mencap is are covering what they need to.

The Mencap team also reflected that projects delivered on an ongoing or embedded basis would allow for increased effectiveness of delivery as: "**Some people are only just starting to get it when projects end**" – Mencap Youth Worker.

58   Lead in time includes a specific time period before the specific digital skills training begins.

This is further complicated by the additional needs of the young people that the Mencap team was working with, **"the length of time it actually takes for them to engage and do some of the interpersonal stuff in the group, it takes them a lot longer, their comfort levels are just not the same as some of the other young people's"** – Mencap Youth Worker.

The young people were evaluated across a series of digital aspects including use of the internet, safety and digital media and the results included:

- 10 out of the 15 young people[59] reported that their digital skills had increased over the project, the other five had stayed the same.
- 12 out of 15 reported an increase in the amount they knew about e-safety.
- 10 out of the 15 reported their level of confidence in doing things like making blogs, sharing photos, or uploading videos has increased.

Whilst there was a range of positive skills development across the project, allowing the sessions to continue for a longer period would have potentially allowed greater digital change to be realised. However, the Mencap team acknowledge that timescales are a challenge across several projects they are involved with. The learnings from this project alongside many others, are being used by the Mencap staff to reflect on, and inform, their future practice and how they deliver across a range of different needs.

Shorter timescales can also prove problematic in the recording of results. The Mencap team cited challenges in understanding and applying an in-depth framework they were previously unfamiliar with. It was a **"good starting point and certainly gave us some things to consider, I'm not sure we quite cracked it within the time frame"** – Mencap Youth Worker. Allowing practitioners more time to become knowledgeable and confident about measurement tools they are using will allow them to be more effectively utilised.

59 One member of the Fermanagh group was not available to complete the feedback form.

Need for flexibility in managing a group with very diverse abilities and interests.

"There was a big skills gap. A big difference across the group members."
MENCAP YOUTH WORKER

Early on in the project the Mencap team understood there was a need to manage a variety of skill levels across each group. The challenge for the staff was to deliver group sessions whilst being able to differentiate across abilities so that no individual felt frustrated. **"With some young people, there was a lot of work that needed to be put on a one-to-one basis on a topic and some topics could take a bit longer for them and you had to allow for them to be able to do it, but not hold it up so much that the other ones get bored"** – Mencap Youth Worker.

There were further challenges for the staff to manage as there were differences in other skills such as verbal communication or literacy. When the Mencap staff wanted to introduce a new topic or skills they would normally begin offline by getting a number of ideas down on paper, but having sessions with lots of reading or writing or even using the flip chart was a challenge for some individuals. **"There was such a gap in some of their abilities and it wasn't just**
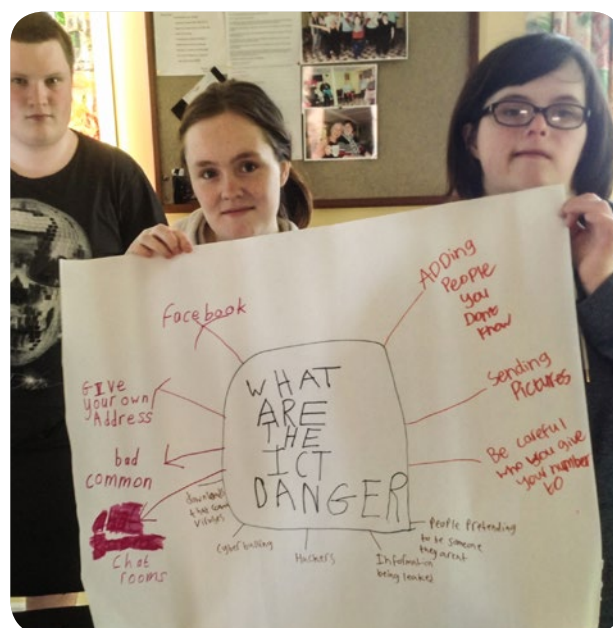
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with technology so much as what they were presented with in terms of their literacy skills and this presented challenges in how we delivered the session" – Mencap Youth Worker.

There were also young people in the group that thrived through this delivery approach. The Mencap team cites a number of young women in their project, who liked to get their thoughts down on paper first and liked to draw and then translate them into a blog or other digital format. **"One of the girls who had little to no experience with technology was able to go onto her blog and write it up all herself by the end of it – which was a massive step"** – Mencap Youth Worker.

There was also a significant differentiation in terms of access to technology. Some of the young people had their own smartphones and some young people did not have a phone at all.

For the staff, this combination presented quite a challenge in terms of their own skill sets. The Mencap team found that the key to overcoming this challenge was flexibility. Each week, they would specifically stick to teaching the same subject to all the young people, but look for more

creative approaches to deliver the learning with specific young people that may require additional support. They were able to utilise their volunteers to support young people that were more advanced with technology and could progress at a faster pace.

But this challenge extended beyond a difference in digital skill level as the group had starkly different interests. This too had to be managed with a flexible approach to task topic and delivery method.

"The sessions needed to have enough in them that they gave some of those young people enough time to actually use the tech but that there were also opportunities for young people to actually have conversation and learn the skills of reflection and support their peers to express or find things out. They needed to do a bit of all of that. A bit of individual work with young people and some of the group dynamic stuff so people actually make connections on an interpersonal level and they had some element of shared experience and success in what they were doing. So we tried to devise lesson plans that delivered all of that over a period of time. That is why there was little bits. The app was a big thing, it was a big chunky thing and there was a lot involved in that, but there was also giving them opportunities to do things in the space of the night so that everybody in the group got a quick win and quick success, even if that was making a wee cartoon character. There was a mixture of stuff in those sessions everybody got to do something every night, but there was a golden thread running through those sessions that got into those big outputs or outcomes we wanted to achieve."

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Challenges in young people's understanding of 'purposeful' digital skills.

> "A lot of the young people were self-aware with their skills or the skills they didn't have, but we did have a couple who would have self-reported that they were Mark Zuckerberg and when it came down to actually needing the skills, they had a base but they were a bit more basic than what they thought they had. They can go onto an Xbox, or a game, or an app on an iPhone they can be Number 1 in the world, but when it actually came to being able to set something up and reporting something and using the skills that were needed they were a lot more limited than they thought."
>
> **MENCAP YOUTH WORKER**

The Mencap team identified two basic challenges with regards to developing young people's digital skills: the young people's understanding of different types of digital skills and how the young people understand their level of ability. Some of the young people used digital devices for leisure activities, and particularly gaming. They could make calls, send texts and some were on Facebook, but they were not aware of how it could benefit them in the long-term and enable long-term positive outcomes such as accessing useful public services. "**Using technology in a purposeful way, just largely wasn't there**" – Mencap Youth Worker.

Even when the Mencap team tried to examine these skills further and explore with the young people how to use technology in a purposeful way, the young people's skill level was much more limited than the young people had themselves expressed. In some cases, this lack of understanding ran even deeper, as some of the young people confused simply possessing a smartphone with 'having skills'.

To adapt to these findings, later sessions in the project were created to focus in on the purposeful skills, such as using online resources to search for relevant education, employment or recreational activities, how these were different to 'just going onto your phone in the standard way' and how you would go about using the skills.

Need for more appreciation that young people with learning disabilities can take part in digital projects.

> "From our point of view to get people with a disability, and certainly to get people with a learning disability to level that playing field from our point of view it's a great lobbying tool"
>
> **MENCAP YOUTH WORKER**

One of the key barriers to digital inclusion for young people with learning disabilities is their lack of exposure to using technology compared with their peers without disabilities, actually increasing their risk of social exclusion, vulnerability to inappropriate use and cyber-bulling. The Mencap team found one of the most useful elements of the #NotWithoutMe project was the evidence it provided them with to call for further digital inclusion work and support for young people with learning disabilities. "**That whole exposure that other practitioners** [had at the BBC cross-sector event] **has really challenged their perceptions about whether you could include young people with a learning disability in this type of work at all – that was really valuable**" – Mencap Youth Worker.

A particular task the Mencap staff cite was the development of the 'Hackers from Above' game. It allowed for a specific inclusion element as the students at the college that developed the game were doing a technical, academic course that the young people in the Mencap group would not traditionally be able to access, so the opportunity for the two groups to mix was an unusual but beneficial experience for both parties.

> "For some of those young people it gave them a tremendous sense of success that for many of them was a first, because they haven't experienced a lot of success in other spheres of their lives so for some of them it was a really big thing, and certainly from the parents' point of view, parents were blown away with what they've done."
>
> **MENCAP YOUTH WORKER DISCUSSING THE WORK THE YOUNG PEOPLE HAD DONE AS PART OF THE #NOTWITHME PROJECT**

Cross-Sector Event

Once the four projects had concluded, the Carnegie UK Trust held a cross-sectoral, cross-jurisdictional interactive event. The Trust wanted to share the emerging findings from each of the #NotWithoutMe pilot projects, explore these ideas and gain feedback from stakeholders working in the similar areas and identify avenues for further development.

On Wednesday 15th March the Trust hosted '#NotWithoutMe @ the BBC' as part of the BBC's Digital Cities Week, Glasgow, on the theme of digital skills and inclusion for vulnerable young people. The event was designed with three key aims in mind, to:

- Convene a wide variety of stakeholders invested in digital inclusion and skills for vulnerable young people to share knowledge and expertise, looking for opportunities to work together.
- Build a clearer picture of the barriers facing young people.
- Identify policy and practice priorities and generate ideas for any future activity.

Over 80 participants attended from a diverse range of backgrounds including youth engagement practitioners, academics, policymakers, digital creatives and media representatives, from Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The event included active discussion sessions on a number of key questions arising from the pilot projects; updates from the project leads; and a creative prototyping workshop where participants were given a limited time to work together to devise an innovative solution to an existing challenge.

The detailed agenda is provided in Appendix 1.

To share the outputs of the event The Trust created a #NotWithoutMe Padlet[60] to serve as an online whiteboard with links to separate pages for the Active Discussions and Creative Prototyping. The boards are all public so can be shared with other colleagues and stakeholders, practitioners and policymakers are encouraged to add their own comments.

60   This can be accessed at www.padlet.com/CUKT/notwithoutme.

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Key Themes and Findings

Each of the four pilots presented learnings unique to their initiative. However, there are number of themes common *across* the projects, cross-sector event and wider #NotWithoutMe programme.[61] As with each of the case studies, these key themes include both insights directly related to delivering digital skills training and also broader learnings around working with vulnerable young people.

This discussion is intended to provide practitioners, policymakers and those interested in digital inclusion for vulnerable young people, with greater awareness and knowledge of these key areas. The information has been grouped into five themes, each concerned with a specific part of programme delivery, with further discussion around each area of work.

A set of recommendations have been created, based on the key learnings from the programme.

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61 The four pilot projects worked with 100 young people and the cross-sector event involved approximately 80 stakeholders with an interest in the topic. The discussion also draws upon relevant reports and policy, but this discussion is not intended to include the full breadth of academic and grey literature on the subject.

Identifying and working with vulnerable young people on digital projects
- The importance of learning alongside peers.
- Challenge of providing a high level of individual support within a group setting.
- Challenges of recruitment and retention, particularly among groups 'in transition'.
- Intersectionality, individuality and identity.
- Digital work is useful to explore identity, self-confidence and wellbeing.

Format for delivery
- Recognising and developing relevant and purposeful skills.
- Appeal of creating with high-tech kit.
- Co-production as a necessity.
- Value the importance of developing digital skills offline.
- Appreciation of need for extended timelines.

Support Networks & Community Engagement
- Need to 'train the trainer'.
- Sharing knowledge and good practice.

Measurement and evaluation
- Challenges of measuring and evaluating development.
- Digital skills are life skills?

Structural challenges
- Assumptions and presumptions.
- The role of power structures.
- Challenges of 'underlying issues' including basic literacy.
- Advanced skills in one area masking low skills in other digital competencies.

Identifying and working with vulnerable young people on digital projects

The importance of learning alongside peers.
All of the #NotWithoutMe pilot projects included some element of group work in their programme delivery. This style of work varied from simple group discussions to a group of young people, each assuming a different role within the team to complete a given activity, such as the Signal participant's digital skills advice film. Each member of the group had to take on a specific responsibility to create the final output. This peer-focused approach not only supported the development of vital teamwork skills that are beneficial for the young people's future work and education potential, but it also allowed an opportunity for young people to support and teach each other and use their skills to learn from one another, rather than from the staff. **"Now there is at least one student who is new to using iMovie, and it was an older student that has passed the skills on, we want to be able to keep the skill set rolling"** – The Pavilion**.** This approach is particularly relevant for digital skills development and support for peer learning is echoed across the sector. As one of the discussions at the BBC event highlighted: **"Peers are the go-to, not parents/carers/mentors/teachers"** – BBC event participant.

The latest Young Scot 5Rights Youth Commission report[62] also supports this position and calls for dedicated youth champions to peer educate on digital literacy and citizenship, as they found that some young people can feel more comfortable learning from other people their own age.

This not to say that one-to-one learning between a young person and a professional is not valuable within digital skills work. Individual support was key in a number of projects to facilitate training with young people that were not yet comfortable with group learning settings or who could benefit from extra support within the wider group context. It was noted by both the Signal and Mencap staff that small group work backed up with individual support was the most effective delivery approach for the groups of young people they worked with.

Challenge of providing a high level of individual support within a group setting.
Every young person involved in the #NotWithoutMe projects had a different starting point in terms of abilities, motivations and interests.

62   Young Scot 5Rights Youth Commission (2017) *Our Digital Rights: How Scotland can realise the rights of children and young people in the digital world.* http://www.youngscot.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Five_Rights_Report_2017_May.pdf [accessed July 2017]

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Whilst the staff involved in developing the project delivery models wanted to utilise this knowledge, this presented a key logistical challenge: *how to balance digital skills training to ensure it is broad enough for the whole group but also suited to individual learners, learning styles and abilities?* Digital skills cannot be taught by a blanket approach. **"One size does not fit all... One size fails most"** John Loughton, BBC event – a sentiment felt by all of the pilot projects. **"The difficulty is that if you pitch it right at one level you risk missing everybody else"** – Digital Ignition (Young Scot)

This was also felt strongly by the Mencap team when supporting young people with different literacy abilities, some had very limited ability. **"There were other people who like to write things on the flip chart and liked to draw things. They liked to get their thoughts down on paper first and then maybe translate them into a blog. Managing to differentiate across the sessions so that nobody felt frustrated at not being able to be understood or to be heard, for the staff that presents quite a challenge"** – Mencap Youth Worker.

All of the pilots highlighted that flexibility was key to delivering effective sessions, which included:

- A mixture of format and timescales for tasks.
- Blending short tasks and longer overarching ones to keep young people engaged.
- Utilising both high and low tech activities.
- Including as many hands-on kinaesthetic learning experiences as possible.

It is worth noting that the ability to be flexible was greatly improved by having session plans and additional staff support.

Challenges of recruitment and retention, particularly among vulnerable groups 'in transition'.

The challenges for the pilot project around managing a variety of skill sets was, in several cases, compounded by the difficulties in attaining consistent attendance of the young people they were working with. Many of the young people that were taking part in the projects had to manage unpredictable housing, educational and employment situations.

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Previous research commissioned by the Carnegie UK Trust highlighted that drop-in sessions in a central location are not always the most effective to reach vulnerable groups, as these groups may not proactively seek out opportunities to take part.[63] This finding held true for the hard-to-reach young people across the #NotWithoutMe programme.

Both the Signal Film and the Young Scot & Prince's Trust projects found they had difficulties in attracting and retaining young people throughout their weekly workshop structures. For both projects however, it is also worth noting there were 'core participants' who did attend every week.

The Pavilion had embedded the project within their weekly curriculum and had more of a consistency of attendance, but the nature of the school is that their cohort changes regularly so they manage this fluidity of engagement on an ongoing basis across all of their work.

The Mencap project was the only one of the four pilots that was able to work with the same group of young people over the full year period, as they had existing relationships with the young people through other Mencap work.

63 White, D (2013) Across the Divide: Tackling Digital Exclusion in Glasgow https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/carnegieuktrust/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2016/02/pub14550115961.pdf [accessed July 2017]

The space in which the digital training takes place also became important for the retention of young people. High-tech studios or digital spaces may be appealing for some young people, as they are places outside their usual daily experience. However, these spaces are not a guarantee that young people will engage. Projects may find it more appropriate and effective to go to the young people's environment and a place they trust.

Intersectionality, individuality and identity.
As with many interventions, each of the four pilot projects, identified a specific group of 'vulnerable' young people to work with.[64] For the #NotWithoutMe projects, this included care experienced young people, young people with learning disabilities, young people excluded from mainstream education and young people not in education, training or employment. Throughout the cross-sector event, a number of key groups were also identified as priorities for further support including; young offenders, those in rural or remote environments and young asylum seekers. Evidence from across the programme confirms that our original hypothesis that 'vulnerable young people', and particularly those at points of transition, were in significant need of further digital support, remains pertinent. However, whilst these labels prove useful for internal professional project development, such as seeking funding or linking with relevant policy areas, there were reservations surrounding the usefulness of this type of language when working directly with young people. These group labels are not how young people define themselves and therefore highlight a significant disconnect between a young person's identity versus the 'professional' view.
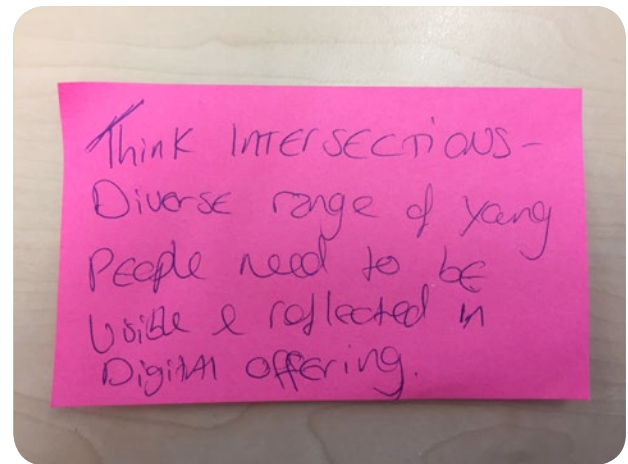
John Loughton
@JohnLoughton
Following

Steph at @signalmediaorg work on #notwithoutme has made us think how we define "vulnerable youth" and thus who is IN and OUT of that label

64 Our definition of vulnerable can be found in the Glossary.

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Furthermore, these labels are not discrete. A young person can fall into one, or many of these definitions as well as many others. These identities in turn may affect how young people use and perceive the digital world. As one comment from a BBC event participant highlighted, we as practitioners **"need to take account of other parts of young people's identity – gender, race, religion etc as this all affects how young people interact online and use digital".** In other words: **"Think intersections – a diverse range of young people need to be visible and reflected in digital offering"** – BBC Event participant. The pilot projects also explored this concept and Signal Film summarised their learnings **"because we had done so much work on this topic** [digital skills] **with young people before, I didn't think we thought we would find it so hard to engage them over these weekly sessions because we had done it in the past. It makes you realise that you can't lump them in a bracket of the type of person just because they are a young care leave. They are all completely different young people with loads of really different circumstances, all of them are in such different situations".**

The question was asked of the sector – how can we become more attuned to the identities of young people; can we do more to **"link into how young people identify and accept themselves?"** BBC Event Participant.

Digital work is useful to explore identity, self-confidence and wellbeing.
Access to, and use of the internet can often
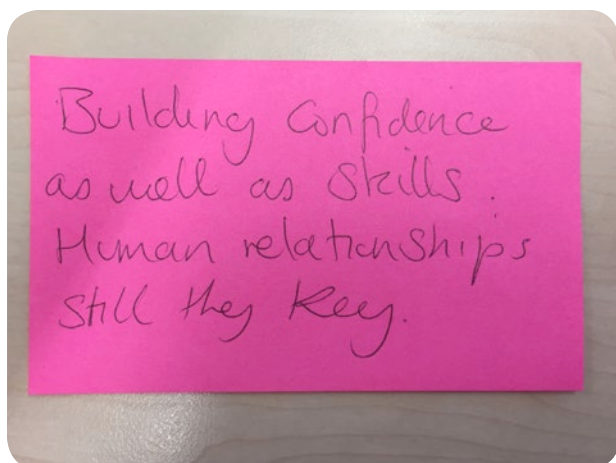
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be heavily associated with issues of negative self-esteem and wellbeing for young people, particularly in relation to social media. It is clear that this is an area where change occurs rapidly and continued research[65] will be required into the links between online use (particularly of social networks), mental health and wellbeing.

However, the internet can also be empowering, liberating and educational.[66] Creative digital methods can help young people engage with difficult topics particularly regarding their own 'labels'. Several of the pilots recognised how digital tools can allow young people to explore and express their experiences and identities in a way they have not been able to previously. Photography, film making and blogging were all approaches to content creation that allowed different individuals to better communicate with those around them, and particularly with their adult support networks. However, the organisations frame these activities with the need to be supported throughout this by trained staff who can help the young people navigate the information they are seeing and creating.

Format for delivery

Recognising and developing relevant and purposeful skills.

A challenge for many of the project staff was how to engage with young people about the topic of 'purposeful' or 'meaningful' skills; skills that are intended to lead to long-term improvements in the young people's educational or employment outcomes and wellbeing. Many of the stakeholders we engaged with throughout the #NotWithoutMe programme reported that the young people they work with used digital technology mainly for entertainment including viewing videos, listening to music or chatting with friends. Far fewer were using online for long form communication activities such as email, form-filling, blogging or CV writing. Several of the pilot projects specifically started their delivery by using some form of general activity matrix or similar activity, to understand how the young people were currently using technology and the results from these exercises presented a similar picture.
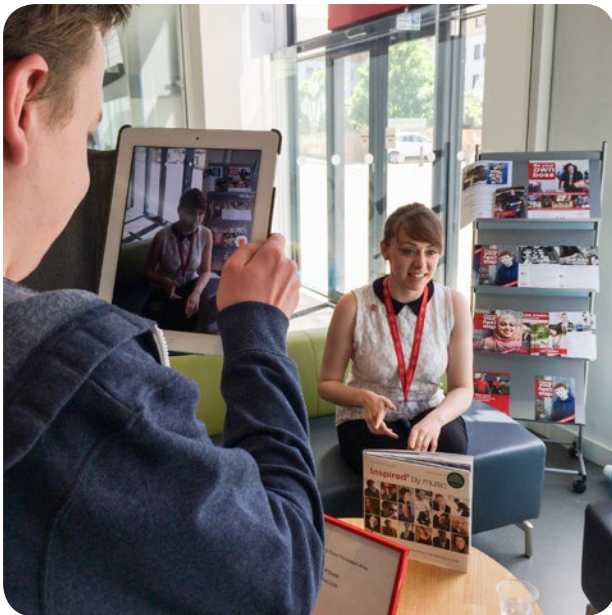
Both Mencap and the Pavilion noted that it was a longer and more gradual process than expected to ensure the young people understood the difference between using technology for social activities or games and using it for a purpose with a long-term outcome such as employment or further education. To help develop this understanding, 'purposeful' digital skills content still needs to be relevant to engage young people. Links needed to be clear and balance long and short-term benefit **"the young people needed to see the connection between the skills being taught and the difference they would make to their everyday lives."** – Digital Ignition (Young Scot).

Zara Kitson
@ZaraKitson

Follow

Visual comms are key to digital inclusion for young people, often a door to open up other digital engagement & literacy #notwithoutme

65 Frith, E (2017) Social media and children's mental health: a review of the evidence https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/up-loads/2017/06/Social-Media_Mental-Health_EPI-Report.pdf [accessed July 2017]

66 Helsper, E and Smirnova, S (2016) Slipping Through The Net https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/research-poli-cies-reports/slipping-through-the-net [accessed July 2017]

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Appeal of creating with high-tech kit.

Physical access to technology is still an issue for many individuals and organisations. Access issues are more likely to be felt by those in vulnerable groups.[67] Access challenges were significant for The Pavilion, and inequality of access was experienced by the young people in the Mencap project, as some young people had the latest smartphones whereas others in the project did not have access to a mobile phone at all. However, it is worth noting that this was not reported throughout all the projects, notably the young people involved in the Signal project all reported a high degree of access to personal technology.

Technology can provide a different way to engage with young people outside of traditional learning methods, and lends itself to hands-on kinaesthetic learning. Working with new technology provides novel opportunities to push young people outside of their comfort zone. There are many examples across #NotWithoutMe of how using equipment (such as professional photography or videography equipment) improved the young people's sense of confidence and trust. In most cases, the young people treated the technology with great respect. Furthermore, most of the creative technology lends itself to supporting and developing team working. Content creation such as film making,

for example, offers an abundance of different roles to suit the interests and abilities of young people and requires them to work together to complete the task.

Co-design as a necessity?

Co-design is widely acknowledged as a necessary and beneficial aspect of project development, particularly when working with young people. All four of the pilots cited the use of co-production, to a greater or lesser extent within their project delivery which secured a wide range of benefits. It allowed the young people the opportunity to input and shape what and how they were going to learn. This ensured the content was relevant and interesting to them and therefore achieving a higher level of engagement from the young people. This co-design process also allowed the staff in the projects to gain a better understanding of the young people they were working with and gave the staff an insight into the young people's daily lives and digital activities. This too allowed the staff to shape a more relevant and beneficial programme. **"We could have looked at a number of other digital themes but the co-design element, where the young people helped us to shape and come up with the themes, directed us to deal with the things that the young people felt were the pressing issues"** – Digital Ignition (Young Scot).

However, this approach is not without challenge. Given the variety of uses of digital technologies, there were tensions in several of the pilots between the skills that young people wanted to

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67   Helsper, E and Smirnova, S (2016) Slipping Through The Net https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/research-poli-cies-reports/slipping-through-the-net [accessed July 2017]

focus on versus the skills that the young people needed to develop to maximise the benefits and mitigate the risks of being online. This highlights the emphasis on the 'co' in co-design. It needs to be a genuine two-way process whereby young people can have meaningful input into both what, and how they learn, balanced with the input of skilled practitioners who can highlight what additional skills and knowledge the young people will need to thrive online.

Value placed on developing digital skills offline.

Despite a focus on digital skills, all of the pilot projects involved extensive skills training away from the technology, such as group discussions, posters, Post-it notes or drawing. Both the pilots and the participants of the BBC event highlighted that there is a danger of focusing too heavily on the 'online' and as a result forgetting or forgoing the 'human element' of digital skills delivery which can be vital in working with groups of vulnerable young people. This is a finding echoed in previous research carried out by the Carnegie UK Trust in Glasgow,[68] which highlighted that to engage people of any age who are not online in digital skills development, conversations need to start with the person and their personal interests and 'hooks', not with the technology. There was concern to ensure an appropriate balance between developing online skills with the social interaction of training and peer learning. Digital inclusion, as with any other skills project can be as much concerned with *how* to learn as *what* is being learnt.

© Young Scot and The Prince's Trust

68   White, D (2013) Across the Divide: Tackling Digital Exclusion in Glasgow https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/carnegieuktrust/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2016/02/pub14550115961.pdf [accessed July 2017]

Appreciation of need for extended timelines.

The #NotWithoutMe programme involved two broadly different approaches in terms of engagement between young people and the organisations, which required different planning inputs, but both required a lead-in time period. The approaches varied from standalone digital projects which worked with a new group of individuals and were run by digitally skilled staff who also had experience working with vulnerable groups, such as the Signal and Young Scot & The Prince's Trust projects. These pilots highlighted that digital skills projects are in many ways, no different to any other project working with a vulnerable group. If an organisation is working with a new group, time is needed to build trusting relationships between the young people and the practitioners, which can also take an extended period of time. There is a clear need to "establish connections with young people in person before moving onto devices/ digital." – BBC Event Participant.

Alternatively there was the embedded approach with delivery of skills over a long time period within an existing programme such as The Pavilion who incorporated digital elements into the lessons which were already creative. The staff however, did require digital upskilling, which takes both time and additional resources.

Also, despite the fast pace of change of digital technology, steps towards digital skills and literacy can be very small, so delivery and measureable change can take a time to be achieved. Mencap, specifically, noted that 12-month timescales are too short to allow for dramatic change, which was echoed by many of the attendees of the BBC event. A proposed solution to this challenge is a stronger focus on embedding digital programmes within existing activities so practitioners already have relationships with the young people. Embedding digital skills across the education curriculum, and not just confined to the technical skills within computer science lessons, is a particular example which requires action to address. The Trust support the calls laid out by the House of Lord Select Committee on Communication that digital education starts within school and that no child should leave school without appropriate digital literacy.[69]

69   Select Committee on Communications (2017) Growing Up With The Internet https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201617/ldselect/ldcomuni/130/130.pdf

Support Networks & Community

Need to 'train the trainer'.

"A lot of the challenges were to do with the young people's understanding but a lot is to do with the way that we deliver things – it is not all about the young people increasing their skills, it is about us continuing to adapt how we engage with young people"
Digital Ignition (Young Scot)

There is significant evidence from across the #NotWithoutMe programme that if vulnerable young people are to develop better digital skills, then it is not only the young people who will require support. Those individuals working with young people[70] also need to feel confident and comfortable digitally. This applies to both the adults involved in directly delivering digital skills training and the wider 'support network' of adults around the young people. This network of support includes parents, teachers, foster carers, youth workers and those delivering other services for young people. Without a real understanding of basic digital skills, the training or support risks quickly becoming inauthentic and unengaging.

The Signal and The Pavilion projects both recognised the value of additional work with

these groups and implemented training for the support network, either for those workers directly training young people or for those who have a significant role in the young people's lives. This training in turn, allowed the young people and their support networks to have more open and productive conversations about their digital behaviours. This need for wider upskilling is supported across the sector, including the latest Young Scot 5Rights Youth Commission report which highlights that a "**lack of knowledge and confidence amongst teaching staff to support young people in digital issues and learnings**"[71] is a key barrier to digital literacy.

However, progression is being made towards tackling this challenge, and it is promising that the UK Government's latest digital strategy includes an approach aimed at addressing this barrier by "**supporting people to up-skill and re-skill throughout their working lives**",[72] an approach also taken in the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Scotland.[73]

There are challenges in terms of how this training should be most appropriately and effectively delivered in terms of time and cost. In terms of resources, Young Scot and The Prince's Trust for example, were able to pull on internal resources

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70 This includes, but is not limited to teachers, support workers, care workers, parents.

71 Young Scot 5Rights Youth Commission (2017) *Our Digital Rights: How Scotland can realise the rights of children and young people in the digital world.* http://www.youngscot.net/wp-content/up-loads/2017/05/Five_Rights_Report_2017_May.pdf [accessed July 2017]

72 DCMS (2017) *UK Digital Strategy* https://www.gov.uk/govern-ment/publications/uk-digital-strategy/2-digital-skills-and-inclu-sion-giving-everyone-access-to-the-digital-skills-they-need

73 Scottish Government (2016) *Enhancing Learning and Teaching Through the Use of Digital Technology.* http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/09/9494/0 [accessed July 2017]
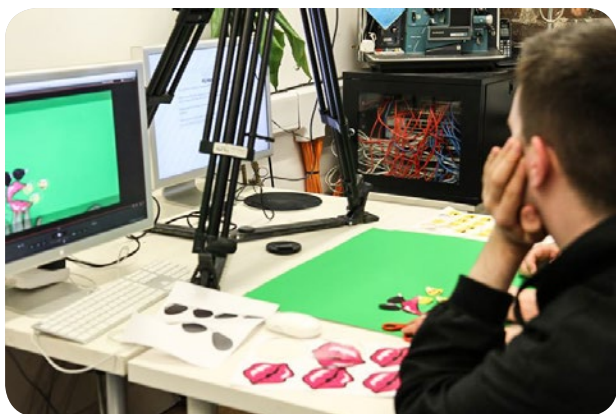
© Signal Film and Media

from across their organisations to deliver the different facets of preparation, whereas The Pavilion had to look externally for support. It may not be a simple case of providing training for staff to attend. Attending external training not only requires additional budget it also requires time from the staff to be out of the classroom or project and outside the normal routine for the young people. This can in many cases be too high a cost as summarised by The Pavilion: **"Opportunities for staff to enhance their skills are needed, we don't get out on courses, it doesn't happen anymore, we can't afford the cover or the disruption here."**

Practitioners highlight that sessions need to be hands-on and allow the support network to play with and explore the technology in the same ways as young people do. A 'Digital sandbox' was one idea created by a group at the BBC event which would allow practitioners and support workers the opportunity to safely explore and understand the online platforms their young people are using.

Conversations also highlighted that defaulting to the digital sector to provide training directly with young people is not always sufficient. As with young people, who do not innately have digital skills, those creating digital products do not always innately have the skills to work effectively with young people, particularly vulnerable young people. The ability to engage and inspire young people is a profession and a unique set of skills in itself.

So, the challenge becomes – how could we bring the two communities together? How do we upskill youth workers and/or encourage the digital sector to invest more highly in their interactions with young people?

Sharing knowledge and good practice.

There is a notable enthusiasm across the multiple invested parties to become better at finding ways to share learnings and resources across organisations and sectors.

The key barrier to this ambition highlighted throughout #NotWithoutMe was a logistical one. How can organisations across different sectors or jurisdictions, working on separate issues linked through the theme of digital skills, communicate, share and learn with and from one another? How does a geographically and purpose-disparate sector celebrate good practice to avoid silos and repetition of challenges? Is there an effective mechanism for cultivating conversation? Who can take the lead in providing this space?

Given the reach of digital across young people's lives there is no one discrete 'digital skills sector'. Digital skills training can – and should – appear in many other sectors, and digital skills training can appear, not explicitly as digital projects, but as projects on mental health, employability or many other initiatives. There is a clear role for conveners and advocates of a joined-up approach to invest resources into creating the space for inter-jurisdictional, cross-jurisdictional and cross-sectoral learning to take place.
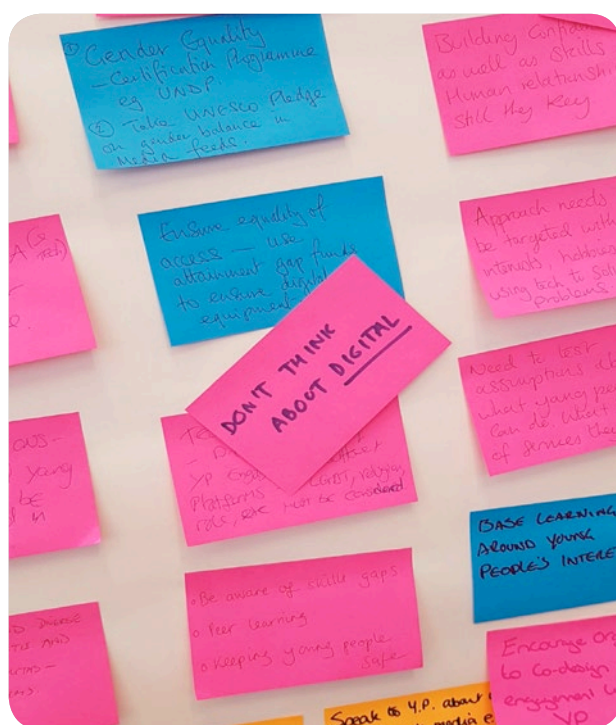
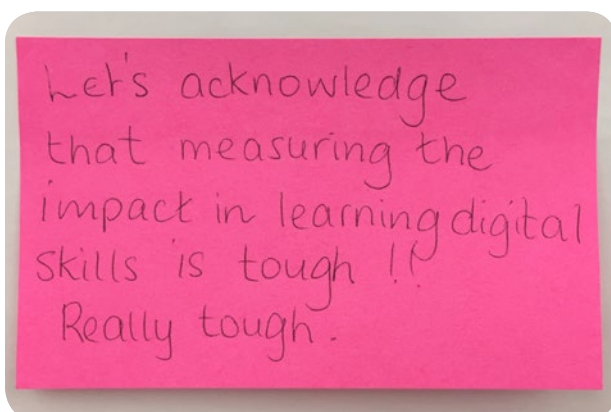© Matt Lloyd

Measurement and evaluation

Challenges of measuring and evaluating development.

Difficulties with measurement and evaluation were echoed across all of the #NotWithoutMe pilots, and the programme as a whole. The challenge manifested itself in three key questions – *what to measure, how to measure and where to start from?*

In terms of the starting point or baseline, this proved a surprising and eye-opening element for several of the pilots and was highlighted as a key challenge at the cross-sector event. The baseline skills that young people reported did not always match the level of ability demonstrated when actionable tasks needed to be completed such as 'searching online for your nearest Post Office'.

Most of the baseline data was collected through self-report data, asking young people how comfortable or confident they felt in using a particular skill or technology, a method which did not always accurately capture their true skill level. A key challenge identified by several of the pilots, including the Mencap youth workers was how to capture baselines more consistently, "**Self-reporting with this group is difficult. Having some kind of objective measure that works across a range of different disabilities and cognitive capacities is not easy**".

It proved difficult to be able to measure where young people are and the pace at which young people are moving on, because of the different skill levels and the different needs the young people have. **"What we have found with some**

© Mencap

young people… is they have difficulty being able to reflect and being able to give an appropriate appraisal of how far they have come, that maybe other young people don't struggle with so much… You need to have a range of inputs and a range of different ways of measuring that and that can be verbal feedback, anecdotal feedback, we are still learning what works best with some of those young people" – Mencap youth worker.

Despite these barriers, there still needs to be a robust method of collecting data. Given that self-report data is not always fully reliable, there is a need to use a variety of methods of tracking development. The most effective for several of the projects was tutor observation, as consistent observers within the project delivery were able to see the progress being achieved. It is "**not enough to ask people how skilled they are – observation over time is key to really know how skilled people really are**" – BBC Event Participant.

This method also allowed for unexpected measures of progress to be noted, such as the high engagement demonstrated by young people in the Signal project who wanted to use the cameras to film additional content for their film.

What is defined as progress and therefore what is measured, was also an area of debate. Whilst the pilot projects utilised a different combination of the Tech Partnership's basic digital skills framing and the Evaluate IT digital inclusion outcomes framework, these were frameworks both designed to capture the more tangible and

Let's acknowledge that measuring the impact in learning digital skills is tough !! Really tough.

objective quantitative elements of digital skills development. Given the initial skills levels and additional needs of many of the young people, qualitative smaller progress steps were seen as far more relevant within many of the projects.

Many of the pilots and stakeholders at the BBC event called for a wider base of measures to be included, tailored to the needs of vulnerable young people. This may include elements such as 'feeling comfortable in attending the digital skills workshop' or 'enthusiasm to take part'. Whilst the latest iteration of the digital inclusion outcomes framework[74] has made important changes to move towards a more flexible format and include a greater variety of outcomes around socialising and wellbeing, further exploration of these qualitative measures of progress would be highly beneficial.

Digital skills are life skills?

One of the biggest areas of debate that arose was the overlap and potential tension between 'digital skills' and 'life skills', more specifically whether they were one and the same, or should be treated as interrelated but distinctly separate concepts.

Having digital skills as their own entity allows a focus and attention to be paid to the specific skills and behaviours needed to be successful online and there is a range of advocates for digital skills to be placed in the same category as numeracy and literacy with regards to its importance. However, it was noted there is a risk that this approach, and projects which focus on these skills primarily, can lead to digital skills becoming

'siloed' and technically focused, when the long-term development of these skills is likely to require a greater level of integration across a number of different learning environments, similarly to literacy and numeracy.

This debate also led into another overarching question: 'What is the threshold for a young person to be classed as 'digitally literate?' What does 'success' look like and once again is this the correct aspiration?' Are digital skills an outcome in themselves or purely a means to an end, a process by which to gain other skills or qualities and ultimately, long-term improvements in wellbeing? Once again, co-design appeared as a partial solution to this challenge, as digital work can "**involve young people in agreeing success criteria, which they can reflect on**" – BBC Event Participant.

Given the call for widening of measurement and indicators with relation to digital ability, how are happiness, confidence and wellbeing included within the definition of successful digital inclusion and how can this be measured? As the digital world evolves, it is likely that frameworks for determining 'basic' digital skills will also keep developing and therefore there is likely to be an ongoing challenge to support people to keep learning and improving their digital capabilities.

This also raises a question about the value placed on attaining the skills. As basic digital skills become more widespread and expected of the population, particularly of young people, it is important that we do not underestimate the level support that some people require to attain them and ensure that support programmes are properly prioritised and resourced.

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74 DCMS (2015), Digital Inclusion Outcomes Framework https://local.go-on.co.uk/resources/the-digital-inclusion-outcomes-framework/ [accessed July 2017]

Structural challenges

Assumptions and presumptions.
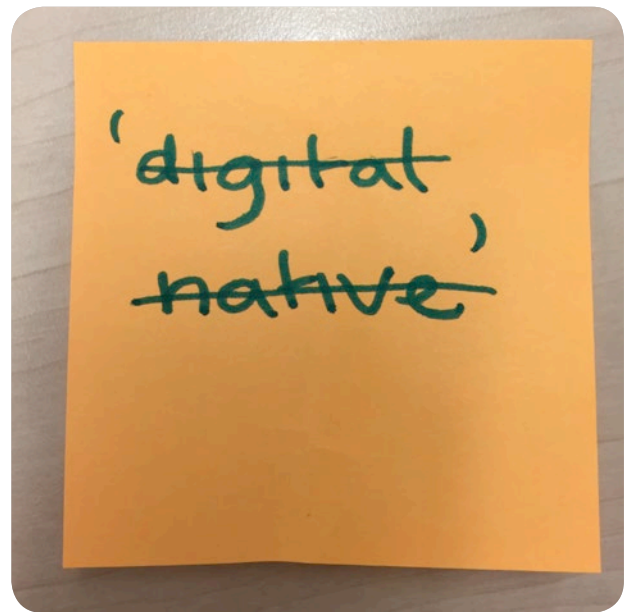One Post-it note from the #NotWithoutMe @ the BBC cross-sectoral event simply reads: "~~Digital Native~~".

Whilst national data shows that a high proportion of young people have basic digital skills[75] there are still as many as 300,000 young people who do not. Experiences from all four pilots and across the #NotWithoutMe programme provided a wealth of evidence to challenge the narrative of intrinsic digital ability, with regards to young people. The pervasive assumption that *all* young people have innate digital skills because they have grown up in the 'digital age', is not the reality. The recent Young Scot 5Rights Youth Commission recommendations report summarises a similar message that: **"The label that we have been given, 'digital natives', refers only to the age that we have been born into, but not necessarily the skills that we have been given."[76]**

There are risks that this assumption about innate ability is now starting to influence young people's attitudes towards their own skills. As both the Mencap and Young Scot & Prince's Trust project highlighted, some young people believe simply having access to a mobile phone means they have the skills to safely and effectively use it. **"For a lot of the young people, they had that presumption about themselves as well. They**

> **Childrens Parliament**
> @Creative_Voices   Following ⌄
>
> Digital skills are not innate - there are no "digital natives". How can we best prepare our children for the digital world?
> #NotWithoutMe

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said they felt digitally confident, but when we observed them doing it, we realised that wasn't always the case. Many felt confident doing it in a social context, using social media to chat to their friends, but when it came to approaching tasks in a more in-depth and even professional way they often didn't have the know-how at all. It was really valuable for us to be able to observe that in the room and to try and build our programme around those observations as well." – Digital Ignition (Young Scot)

Clearly, if young people believe they do not have to be concerned with actively developing their digital skills and behaviours then this could lead them to encounter problems or difficulties online, or to not cultivate their skills to the extent that they might do, resulting in missed opportunities for positive development.

Even the presumption that young people are accessing digital technology in *any* form can be incorrect, as there are some very vulnerable young people who are completely digitally excluded. Whilst lack of access to technology was not explicitly addressed across all of the #Notwithoutme projects, there were young people across the programme who reported very little or no use of digital technology in their day-to-day lives.

Challenges to assumptions about young people's relationship with digital extend beyond inclusion or skill levels. Assumptions around interest or

75   Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index (2017) http://www.lloyds-bank.com/assets/media/pdfs/lloyds-bank-consumer-digital-index-2017.pdf p39 [accessed July 2017] Which includes the Basic Digital Skills Survey.

76   Young Scot 5Rights Youth Commission Youth Commission (2017) *Our Digital Rights: How Scotland can realise the rights of children and young people in the digital world.* http://www.youngscot.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Five_Rights_Report_2017_May.pdf page 11 [accessed July 2017]

motivation can prove equally misplaced. Based on their previous work with care experienced young people, Signal assumed the group of young people they were working with would want to come to their studios to undertake their workshop. Instead, however, to create engagement with the project, the Signal team had to leave the studio and go to where the participants felt comfortable. Whilst all of the projects included young people within the design of the outcomes, Young Scot and The Prince's Trust were the most overt advocates for young people to be involved in co-designing the projects they are a part of, and to share their experiences before many project decisions are taken. The example 'day in the life' exercise was designed specifically to **"build up a picture of what young people's engagement with the digital world looks like. We didn't want to make any assumptions throughout this project and we didn't want to presume, as is often the case, that young people are digital natives and thrive in this world. We wanted them to tell us their experiences."**

Whilst in practice, it may be hard to initiate digital projects without any assumptions or preconceptions entering the delivery, the evidence suggests that projects can be far more effective if these are minimised, or are open to be challenged. Staff designing projects should evaluate what their assumptions and preconceptions might be, and whether they can be qualified with any existing evidence. One speaker at the BBC event challenged the room to think critically about our own, if well intentioned, assumptions – **"Do we as adults and professionals ever ask ourselves how much are we the barrier? What are our own adult-based, already out-of-date assumptions, which are different paradigms from that of today's generation?"**

Power structures.

Digital tools have been hailed as the great equaliser, connecting people across all societal
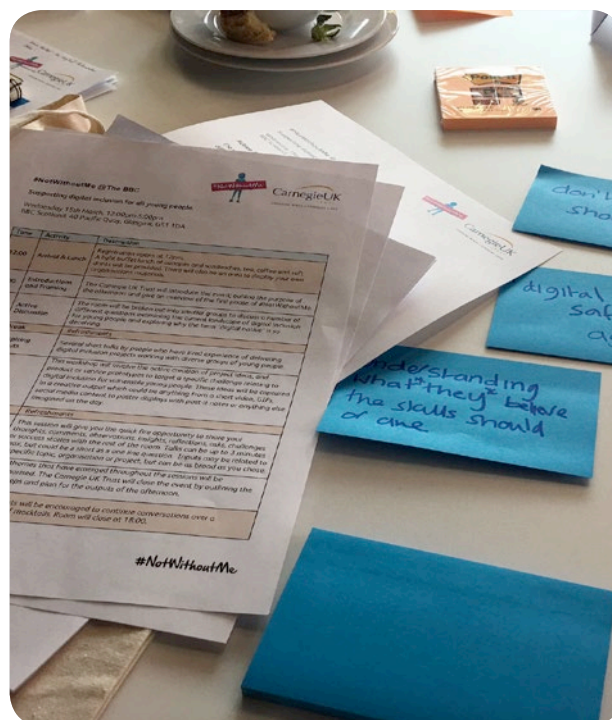
© Jennifer Jones

groups or boundaries and amplifying the voices of those who are traditionally marginalised. However, digital tools are not immune to imbalances in power structures. In some cases, online platforms can serve to reinforce power imbalance. The dominant values of digital tools represent the values of developers, not all societal interests are equally represented in the tech sector.

Practitioners at the #NotWithoutMe @ the BBC event raised questions about how they can design digital initiatives which empower young people to feel in control and safe online and build their knowledge and resilience to manage these potential power imbalances. How can organisations create an equal and positive learning environment to support engagement with resources which may not be equal or positive?

It was also noted that power inequalities also play a role in determining which skills are deemed 'useful' and all in the sector need to be aware and critical of how this shapes digital interventions and training.

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Role of 'underlying issues', including basic literacy.

Basic inequality of access to technology has been cited in many cases as a significant factor in emphasising the digital skills gap.[77] Whilst access was not a challenge explicitly addressed in #NotWithoutMe, the general findings around access aligned with experiences in both The Pavilion and Mencap pilots. Both projects cited challenges in restricted organisational or personal access to technology, which had limiting consequences for the young people involved. In contrast however, the participants in the Signal Film pilot all cited high usage of personal devices such as mobile phones, although it is worth noting that these participants were subject to restricted access through rules and regulations of the residential units.

In addition to personal access barriers, there are also a number of other underlying infrastructure challenges to digital inclusion. The BBC event highlighted that young people from rural communities and those experiencing geographic isolation are particularly at risk of exclusion. It raised the questions about how, practitioners working with vulnerable young people on digital

skills can overcome infrastructural barriers such as poor wifi, which require significant investment either personally or at a community level.

In terms of additional underlying skills barriers, poor literacy skills[78] compound the difficulties in acquiring digital skills and have the potential to be lost in the focus on 'digital by default". The ability to comprehend and be critical of information is recognised as crucial to being safe and effective online, and to be able to access vital services through search engines or online forms. Literacy was cited across all of the projects as a major challenge to delivery. **"Literacy was a significant issue. Poor literacy, including digital literacy was an issue that permeated all areas of activity –** Digital Ignition (Young Scot). **"The ability to read and write was an issue for the young people, so having sessions with lots of reading or writing or even using the flip chart was a challenge and could be a very disempowering thing"** – Mencap.

These challenges manifest themselves both in terms of the young people's ability to use online resources such as using search engines or creating digital CVs which require more extensive literacy skills, but also in the young people's ability to feedback to the project staff. Young Scot and The Prince's Trust also highlighted the challenge in understanding the evaluation forms submitted by the young people, making it more default to understand where to improve the programme delivery.

There is however, potential for positive learnings. The Pavilion found that **"building digital literacy skills have helped develop broader critical literacy skills"**. They were able to work with the young people in their project to use online resource to start to understand how to develop critical literacy skills through evaluating what pieces of information they were finding online were relevant to their film creation. This alternative relationship between digital skills and literacy is one that requires further exploration.

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77   White, D (2013) Across the Divide: Tackling Digital Exclusion in Glasgow https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/carnegieuktrust/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2016/02/pub14550115961.pdf [accessed July 2017]

78   This is not to say that other basic skills such as numeracy were not important, but they were not cited as extensively across the #NotWithoutMe programme.

Advanced skills in one digital area masking low skills in other digital competencies.
Across #NotWithoutMe there has been a clear finding in relation to demonstrable skills. Technical ability does not directly correlate to a young person's digital literacy. Those that are 'tech literate' may not always be using their skills in a positive way, which can be significant and particularly relevant for safety concerns. Whilst young people may seem competent in the creation of digital content or in navigating social platforms, their understanding of privacy or of what constitutes acceptable content may be lacking, leaving them more vulnerable to online risks. Whilst there is a push for increasing young people's technical skills at the top end of ability through initiatives like coding clubs, practitioners and policymakers need to ensure the basics such as safety and understanding appropriate behaviours are also adequately addressed.

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Recommendations

To support future practice and policy development, a number of recommendations have been developed from the findings gathered through the first phase of #NotWithoutMe.

Working with vulnerable young people

1. **Practitioners should take a flexible approach to delivery methods**
   including; modifiable duration and incorporation of peer learning and one-to-one approaches where possible. Peer support can be hugely beneficial to young people's engagement within projects, while others may need individual support throughout.

2. **Organisations which already have trusted relationships with young people must drive recruitment and engagement**
   Previous research by the Trust highlighted that people who are most in need of digital skills support are unlikely to proactively seek training – this is not a generational issue. Therefore, projects should be led, or at least work in collaboration with organisations which have existing, trusted relationships with young people and can effectively identify those who would benefit.

3. **Language to be inclusive and understandable by young people.**
   The language used to recruit young people into digital projects and throughout the initiatives should be framed positively. They should not focus on the skills which they may currently 'lack'. Key language related to projects should be tested with young people.

4. **Appreciate that advanced skills in one digital area may mask low skills in other digital competencies.**
   Organisations and the public need to be aware that technically able young people may still need support to develop their digital skills: particularly in relation to safety and critical literacy. Example: A young person may be highly proficient in sourcing videos from YouTube and using Snapchat filters, but may not be able to upload appropriate content or manage a professional digital identity on LinkedIn.

Format for delivery

5. **Ensure that digital skills training and content relates to the participants' real-life context.**
   Young people need to see the relevance and practicality of the training being provided. Where possible, make it locally specific or immediately useful.

6. **Explore creative methodologies for programme delivery.**
   Creative digital media such as photography and film making can be effective methods for engaging young people, requiring lower levels of basic literacy and supporting kinaesthetic learners.

7. **Digital skills development starts offline and 'offline' continues to be an important delivery method.**
   Practitioners and policymakers should consider how digital skills (such as managing your online identity) can be developed initially without the need to deliver an online activity. Digital inclusion and social inclusion are intertwined and breaking down a concept before introducing technology to it can be important.

8. **Engage in discussion with young people about purposeful digital skills.**
   Whilst young people may be prolific consumers of technology for social and entertainment purposes, organisations need to engage young people in the uses of digital beyond this – as a means to support longer term improvements in wellbeing with access to health care, employment, housing and further education.

9. **Embed digital skills learning into existing long-term skills development programmes in formal and informal education settings.**
Improvements in digital skills with vulnerable young people can require a large investment of time and staff resource. Progress can be slow, so short-term projects may not be the best format for delivering digital skills change. Digital skills rarely need to be developed in isolation from other skills.

Community of practitioners

10. **Consideration should be given as to how meaningful digital skills training can be included as part of initial professional training**.
This should enable practitioners such as teachers, social workers and youth workers to identify and support young people to be digitally literate and 'access the digital world creatively, knowledgeably, and fearlessly'.[79]

11. **Provision of appropriate ongoing training for the support networks for young people**.
Adults and organisations who work with young people, including but not limited to; care workers, foster parents, parents, youth workers and teachers, also need adequate skills training to enable them to develop the knowledge and confidence to support their young people.

12. **Promotion of inter-jurisdictional, cross-jurisdictional and cross-sectoral learning.**
Digital work touches on many different aspects of everyday life, so there are many organisations interested in the effect of digital inclusion. We need to look across sector and jurisdictional boundaries to share our learnings to develop the most effective programmes.

Measurement and evaluation

13. **Inclusion of base level measurement other than self-report data, to understand the true starting point.**
Self-report data may not be the most appropriate measure of baseline skills as young

people may not always present an accurate assessment of their own skills and abilities. Using a range of measures including actionable testing will help provide practitioners a more accurate start point.

14. **Ensure digital skills evaluations utilise a range of qualitative measurement tools and softer indicators in progress evaluation.**
Qualitative measures such as tutor observation and feedback, or the production of digital assets such as blogs, provide a wealth of additional information for practitioners about the development of young people and evidences a wider variety of impacts.

Structural challenges

15. **Counter the 'Digital Native' narrative in relation to young people.**
Policymakers, practitioners and academics should not assume young people have innate digital skills, are 'digital natives', and should instead assume that some level of support to develop skills may be required.

16. **Ensure young people are involved in shaping digital skills projects,**
To avoid incorrect assumptions about baseline skill levels, interests and motivations, practitioners should co-produce initiatives, having young people involved from the start, to ensure that the solutions created are relevant and appropriate.

17. **Specific consideration of vulnerable young people within digital participation strategies.**
There are a number of successful digital participation strategies implemented at both a local and national level which focus on improving basic digital skills for many traditionally offline groups. Policymakers should ensure future iterations of these plans are mindful of, and make provision for, the specific and different digital support needs of vulnerable young people.

18. **Improve understanding into the challenges related to basic literacy in digital skills learning.**
Literacy remains a key barrier to young people becoming digitally literate. Further research can be done to understand how the two can be tackled in tandem; how technology can support critical literacy development and how improved literacy can support improved digital outcomes.

79   Young Scot 5Rights Youth Commission (2017) *Our Digital Rights: How Scotland can realise the rights of children and young people in the digital world.* http://www.youngscot.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Five_Rights_Report_2017_May.pdf page 11 [accessed July 2017]

Conclusion

The #NotWithoutMe programme has collected and presented a variety of evidence that challenges the 'digital native' narrative and supports the position that digital skills of young people should not be taken for granted. Young people's digital ability varies significantly, and even a self-identified high level of digital skill is not a guarantee of its presence.

The four pilot projects all started with different aims and intended outcomes, but they all worked on developing a broad set of skills that touch on many aspects of young people's lives. None focussed on digital skills in isolation.

- **Signal Film and Media** established the importance of upskilling the support network of young people, and of investing time and resource into creating a comfortable and positive environment in which young people can flourish.
- **The Pavilion** powerfully demonstrated that creative digital projects can be used to explore personal journeys, self-confidence and wellbeing and through these methods start to develop skills.
- **Young Scot and The Prince's Trust** evidenced the importance of involving young people in the design of the initiatives and the need to assess baselines through a variety of means.
- **Mencap in Northern Ireland** highlighted that content needs to be flexible for optimal engagement and not to underestimate the capability of young people with learning disabilities to actively take part in digital skills projects.
- **#NotWithoutMe @ the BBC** showcased the variety of organisations and individuals invested in the development and wellbeing of young people online and the breadth of initiatives which involve digital skills.

The findings reinforced that there is real need for further support for young people, particularly when they are at points of transition in their lives.

Many areas of challenge remain, including how to accurately evaluate starting points, how to provide individualised training in group settings, how to take account of basic literacy deficits and how to support a network of practitioners and carers to develop their skills. Action-based research and innovative practice can further explore these barriers and begin to build on the solutions identified through #NotWithoutMe.
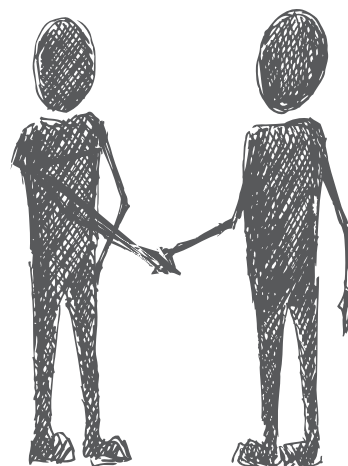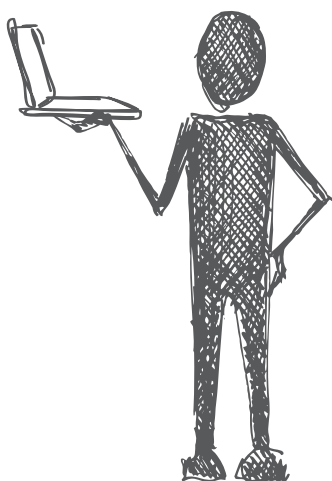
Glossary

To support the understanding and clarity of this report, we have included our definitions of a number of the key terms used.

#NotWithoutMe

When referring to #NotWithoutMe we are referring to the programme as a whole, which began in 2015. Some of the pilots chose to also use #NotWithoutMe as their specific project names but others, such as Young Scot and The Prince's Trust, ran their project under a separate name, Digital Ignition.

Young Person

The #NotWithoutMe programme aimed to work with , and describes a young person, as a participant from the age of 11 to 25. Some of the partner organisations work with young people outside this age range. We appreciate that a 'young person' is not a fixed category and that other age brackets or definitions are used.

Vulnerable

A young person may be considered 'vulnerable' for a number of reasons. We have adopted the broad definition: 'The group of children who carry with them risks and difficulties which make it much harder for them to succeed in life, to be happy and healthy and have a chance at a good future.'[80]

Digital Native

A term commonly used to imply that young people have 'innate' digital skills due to growing up in a technologically driven world. The term was originally coined by Mark Prenzsky[81] to refer to the time period that young people were born into, which consisted of high technology use.

Basic Digital skills

#NotWithoutMe has used the 'Get Digital basic skills framework' (formerly the Go on IT Digital Skills Framework). This framework covers five key areas, the competencies are collectively grouped as minimum standard of basic digital skills: Managing information, communicating, transacting, problem-solving and creating.[82]

Digital Literacy

#NotWithoutMe uses a wide definition of digital literacy to include "the capabilities which fit someone for living, learning and working in a digital society."[83]

Digital Inclusion

#NotWithoutMe has followed the UK Government's definition "Digital inclusion, or rather, reducing digital exclusion, is about making sure that people have the capability to use the internet to do things that benefit them day to day"[84] including but not limited to increasing digital skills, connectivity and accessibility. The term is interchanged with digital participation and digital engagement.

Digital Exclusion

The unequal access and capacity to use information and communication technologies (ICTs) that are seen as essential to fully participate in society.[85]

Co-design

A collaborative and participatory approach to design which involves people who will use a service (the users) and people who will deliver the service. The process of working together helps to ensure the result will meet the needs of all involved. The term co-production is also used.

80 Children's Commissioner (2017) *On measuring the number of vulnerable children in England* https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CCO-On-vulnerability-Overveiw.pdf page 1 [accessed July 2017]

81 Prensky, (2001) "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants Part 1", On the Horizon, Vol. 9 Issue: 5, pp.1-6, https://doi.org/10.1108/10748120110424816 [accessed July 2017]-

82 Basic Digital Skills Framework https://www.thetechpartnership.com/globalassets/pdfs/basic-digital-skills-standards/basic_digital_skills_framework.pdf [accessed July 2017]

83 Scottish Government (2016) *Enhancing Learning and Teaching Through the Use of Digital Technology.* http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/09/9494/0 page 33 [accessed July 2017]

84 Cabinet Office (2014) *Government Digital Inclusion Strategy* https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-inclusion-strategy/government-digital-inclusion-strategy [accessed July 2017]

85 Schejter, A., Ben Harush, O. & Tirosh, N. (2015). *Re-theorizing the "digital divide": Identifying dimensions of social exclusion in contemporary media technologies.* A paper presented at the FACE conference "European Media Policy 2015: New Contexts, New Approaches," April 9-10, 2015, University of Helsinki, Finland.

Appendix 1 #NotWithoutMe @ the BBC: Event Overview

Intro

#NotWithoutMe @ the BBC was hosted as part of the BBC's Digital Cities Week Glasgow and the afternoon kicked off with the BBC's lead organiser, Andrew Lockyer, outlining the purpose of Digital Cities.

Gina Wilson from the Carnegie UK Trust introduced the event by reaffirming the context of the #NotWithoutMe programme: Digital starting points are not equal. Not all young people have basic skills, not all are digitally included. Slipping through the Net identified that 40% of young people suffering disadvantaged are lacking in "netiquette" (an understanding of socially acceptable online behaviour) and highlighted basic skills gaps emerging.

We need to work together to debunk the idea of the digital native, or risk those outside the digital mainstream being left behind.

Inspiring Inputs

Three of the #NotWithoutMe pilot projects gave an overview of their programmes. This included who they worked with and how this evolved, their delivery method, key aspects of the content they included and their key observations around developing digital skills with young people. They also touched upon some of the different challenges they had faced in the design and delivery of their projects, including managing a variety of skills levels within one group and of supporting young people who over-report their digital skill level. Summary films of the three projects can be viewed by following the links below or short descriptions can be found on the #NotWithoutMe page here.

- Allan Lindsay, Young Scot
- Steph Bryant, Signal Film and Media
- Maggie Hamilton, Mencap NI

Lightning Talks

This time allowed for three minute pitches from any attendee and touched on a variety of topics including:

- **Highlighting organisations and project work** – contributions came from STRETCH the only organisation in the UK allowed to bring iPads into prisons, equipping prisoners with skills in new media to create digital stories about their personal experiences of the criminal justice system and the life that led them there and from Matthew Lloyd about Digital Heroes a skills programme running in Wales.
- **Asks to the audience**
- **Information sharing**
- **Feedback from previous sessions** – Debbs shared her group's idea from the Creative Prototyping for a Digital Dangers online sandbox! Helping young people navigate online dangers in a safe and secure environment.

Active Discussion

A key focus of this event was to encourage shared learning, the first session involved small group discussions on a number of topics to gain a variety of perspectives. Four questions were posed based on the emerging themes of #NotWithoutMe:

1. What barriers do young people face in acquiring digital skills?
2. What advice do you have for organisations working with young people in terms of the approach they could take to improve basic digital skills?
3. How should we be evidencing and measuring success in digital skills and inclusion projects for young people?
4. Who could benefit from further digital inclusion support?

The questions produced energetic discussion, some heated debate, and over 300 Post-it note responses. Key themes from this session (and the rest of the day) are discussed later in this report. The raw data can be viewed on the #NotWithoutMe Padlet.

Prototyping

The task for this session was to work in cross-disciplinary teams to create a project idea tackling a challenge related to digital inclusion for vulnerable young people. The purpose of the activity was to generate a diverse set of new project ideas and allow the opportunity for new partnerships to develop. Teams had just over an hour to brainstorm ideas, chose an area of focus and develop a creative output explaining their project.

Prototypes included:
- A bus with wifi that can also help you map your digital footprint to get 'work ready'.
- A new digital skills charter for young people.
- A service ensuring accessible information young people may need, is in the places they will already be online.

The full collection of outputs can be seen here.

Summary

John Loughton @JohnLoughton, global youth leader and CEO of leadership company Dare2Lead, provided an insightful summary of the afternoon. He captured his thoughts and calls to action under four key areas:

- **Earlier** – education on digital cannot start in high schools, it needs to be a focus in primary schools. We need to focus on prevention, stopping things from happening, not just firefighting once they have already occurred.
- **Embedded –** digital skills need to be included across the whole curriculum, not just confined to an ICT classroom.
- **Engaging** – how do we make an interesting destination for young people to learn about digital skills. How do we become more targeted and engage the right people?
- **Exciting** – learning digital skills should be fun! It needs to be interactive, challenging, shocking and experiential as most learn by doing.

Further Information

The information provided in this report is not exhaustive and The Trust invites you to get in touch with the project team if you would like to discuss any element of the programme further.

For more information please contact Gina Wilson (gina@carnegieuk.org) or Anna Grant (anna@carnegieuk.org)

Keep the conversations going on Twitter at #NotWithoutMe and follow the @CarnegieUKTrust

Project Page: www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/project/notwithoutme/
Instagram: @_not_without_me_
Padlet: www.padlet.com/CUKT/notwithoutme
Storify: www.storify.com/Gina_Wilson_/notwithoutme-the-bbc

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