



Digital by Default

What if we build it and they can't come?

Deloitte.
Digital

The challenge

In order to reflect how citizens of this country have increasingly taken advantage of the internet in their personal and business lives, the government committed in November 2012 to delivering its services primarily online. Cabinet Office's policy objective of 'Digital by Default' envisages being able to offer an improved experience for citizens of government services, at a reduced cost to the public purse. The Government's Digital Strategy¹ sets out how the government can make up to £1.2 billion worth of savings by 2015 by making everyday transactions digital.

However, in order for this vision to be realised, there is a need to ensure that these new digital services are actually used by citizens.

In a recent study conducted by YouGov on behalf of Deloitte Digital (*Making Digital Default - understanding citizen attitudes*²), we found that as many as 78% of the surveyed population had already used an existing government digital service. These citizens will engage, provided the offering is secure (75%), simple (70%), informative (68%) and saves time (68%) or money (66%).

The signs are positive - *but this will be no ordinary channel shift.*

The principles and ethics of universal service provision within the public sector require us to think beyond the traditional approach. Merely identifying who the most valued citizens of a given organisation are, and focussing on how they want to be engaged is not sufficient. Unlike the private or financial service sectors, those citizens with a prohibitively high cost-to-serve cannot be encouraged to look elsewhere.

In the public sector, there are no less valued citizens.

Consequently, despite our research indicating a clear appetite for online government services amongst the majority, we need to develop an approach that makes provision for *everyone*. This includes ensuring adequate provisions are made to comply with the Equality Act 2010. Replacing the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995, this legislation places obligations on organisations to make provision for as wide an audience as possible, regardless of their age, disability, gender, beliefs etc.

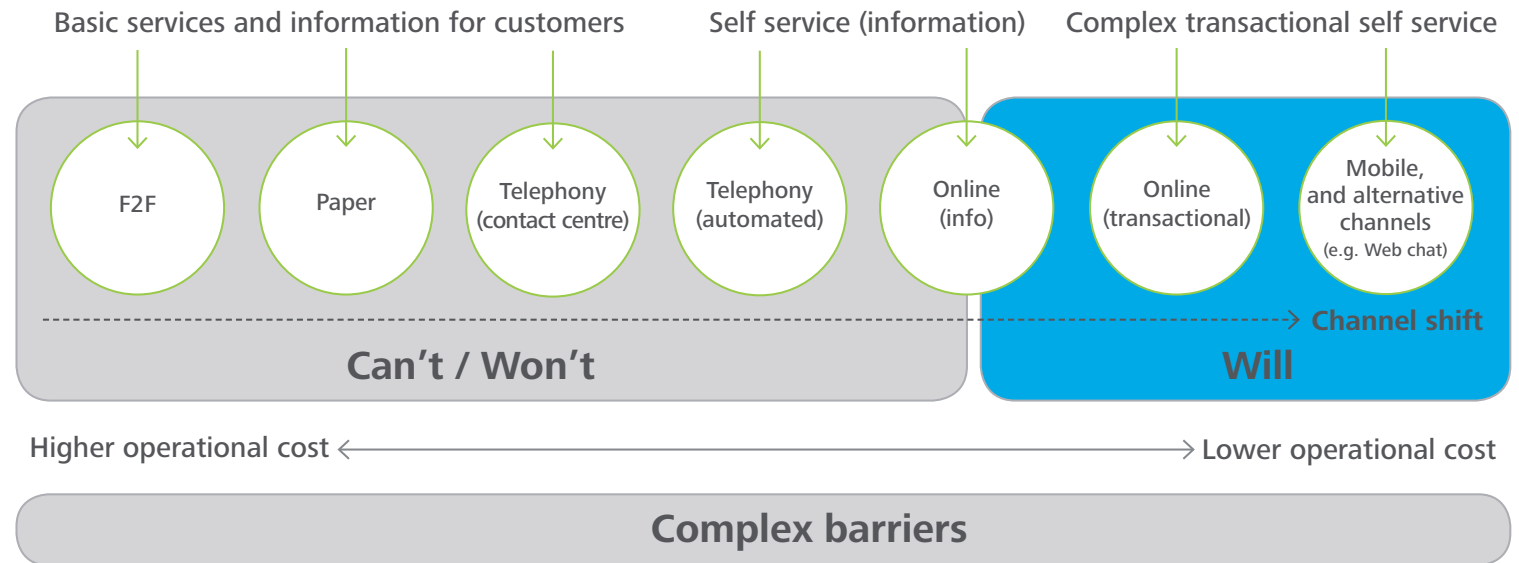
Start with the basics

The Deloitte Digital solution to this challenge involves combining our deep knowledge of public sector organisations with our extensive experience of delivering channel shift in the private and financial services sectors. By breaking the citizen base down into manageable segments, we help our clients understand better who they are interacting with. Strategies for tailoring the service offering to the specific needs of the citizen can then be developed in more accurate and relevant ways.

Our recent work in government outlines three citizen groups in relation to digital services: those who **will** use the services, those who **won't**, and those who **can't**.

The thought of being required to change your 'channel of choice' from offline to online can for some citizens be an unwelcome one, even for those who have the capability to use online services - these citizens form the **won'ts**. Unlike the **can'ts**, these citizens don't have complex personal or technological barriers to overcome, but lack the receptiveness for change that marks those who **will** embrace the new service.

The below diagram shows the shift in customer service delivery, moving to more low cost approaches mapped to our segment groups.



- Considerations for Assisted Digital service offering
- Digital by Default service offering

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy>

² http://www.deloitte.com/view/en_GB/uk/industries/government-public-sector/making-digital-default/index.htm

Start with the basics (cont)

Four key areas should be examined when aspiring to drive citizens online:

1. **The online experience offered** – the system designed should be so straightforward, intuitive and convenient to use, that those who can use it will choose to
2. **The messaging and promotion needed** – a clear and targeted communication strategy, to raise awareness of the service and its benefits
3. **The support and infrastructure required to embed the change** – the appropriate training, buy-in from senior management and organisational design to ensure the service is 'fit for purpose' within a suitably mature digital culture
4. **The measurement of the use of that online service** – particularly in relation to its offline equivalent, in order to allow an ethos of continuous improvement

These steps should maximise uptake of the digital services by those citizens who **will** be most inclined to use it, while potentially going some way to changing the outlook of those who **won't** normally consider such a service. By driving a significant portion of citizens to voluntarily use the online service, those who are in need of assistance (those who **can't**) become easier to identify.

For those citizens who **can't** access online government services, the approach known as Assisted Digital is needed.

Defining Assisted Digital and identifying 'genuine need'

Assisted Digital is about supporting citizens to use online public sector services who can't use digital provisions independently.

Those who cannot get a broadband connection due to their location, or have physical/mental impairments that prevent them from using computers, have as much right to be served as equal citizens as those able to use online services and interact in a low-cost way.

Defining and identifying 'genuine need', as opposed to 'perceived need' on the part of the citizen, is a key part of the overall delivery of 'Digital by Default'.

With this in mind, three questions frame how an Assisted Digital provision could be applied:

- 1) How is 'genuine need' *defined*?
- 2) How is 'genuine need' *identified* in a cost effective and timely manner?
- 3) How are those with a 'genuine need' best *provided for*?

The overriding aim of identifying 'genuine need' is to implement the Assisted Digital model in practice, **for only those that really need it**, to avoid undermining the 'Digital by Default' objectives discussed above.

The process by which an organisation seeks to identify 'genuine need' can be called triage methods. Triage can be delivered in a formal or informal way, and can provide answers to a number of targeted questions about the citizen, ascertaining whether they have a 'genuine need' for the provision of Assisted Digital support.

However, identifying citizens' varied personal, social and economic circumstances to determine the need for Assisted Digital support is not straightforward. Neither are any two government objectives precisely the same. Determining suitable channel strategies, processes and follow-up activity requires both deep knowledge of the relevant policy area and the desired citizen experience. These choices may involve huge disparities of cost and citizen experience between them, and may require vastly contrasting levels of rigour.

In short, this is not a task to be taken lightly.



Once the question of identification is resolved, what remains to be determined is what support those citizens who have a 'genuine need' should be provided with.

Two broad choices are available:

- *Short term solutions* centred around 'doing it for the citizen', where the government service steps in and solves the problem directly by providing offline alternatives (either by face to face, telephony or paper). This might in some cases take place in the same interaction as the triage process. The public body may also consider sign-posting to other agencies who may be able to provide further support (e.g. basic IT training, Citizens' Advice etc.)
- *Long term investment* in education and infrastructure, helping drive digital adoption in situations where none was realistically possible before

The effectiveness of available delivery methods may vary. 41% of those who had not used a government digital service told YouGov that clearer instructions online - designed for first time users - would help them overcome the barriers they faced, while only 9% felt that tutorials in public spaces such as libraries would be beneficial. Nearly a quarter identified face-to-face advice at a Post Office as an effective way of enabling the use of a government digital service, while around 20% felt that telephone helplines would be a key method of achieving this.

In summary, we believe a four step approach can support the delivery of Assisted Digital services in the Public Sector:

- 1 **Get the basics right - undertake thorough, focused citizen engagement to understand who the relevant citizens are.** It is essential to understand who currently **will, won't** and **can't** use your digital services, listening to 'the voice of the citizen', so that decisions are taken on the basis of an accurate understanding of the nature and scale of the challenge.

- 2 **Determine what 'genuine need' means in your citizens' context - and put in place an approach to identify it.** This can often be done using a triage approach that asks the right targeted questions. Some categories could include those with a disability; language barriers; those without the money to be able to afford a computer; those without the skills and confidence to use online services; or those who lack broadband access due to their location.

- 3 **Agree which delivery options would make best use of your available budget.** This involves examining the costs and benefits of relevant short and long term investments, whilst piloting potential delivery options to check they work in the 'real world' i.e. testing and gathering evidence from real citizens, in everyday situations.

- 4 **Implement the chosen solution, while communicating to each citizen segment in a firm but sensitive manner.** Communicating the benefits of adopting the online services while making sure those who need Assisted Digital support are aware of it, will help to ensure citizens are 'brought on the journey', and have every opportunity to adopt the digital service.

The successful delivery of an Assisted Digital service has the potential to provide support for those who really need it, in addition to satisfying government-wide agendas like 'Digital by Default'. Furthermore, the benefits received from a successful Assisted Digital service can be far wider than initially aimed for. Increased digital adoption by the citizen, not only for the originally intended services but across a range of government services, is a realistic target – provided the experience is positive, and continues to improve in response to citizen's needs.



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1. Get the basics right



2. Determine what 'genuine need' means



3. Weigh up cost/benefit of options



4. Implement your chosen solution