Green Party
Digital Policy

October 2015

Digital Policy

October 2015

Table of Contents

1. Summary & Key Points

The world of modern consumer technology is changing fast. There has been an explosion in the use of communication devices and social media in recent years. With new technologies come new challenges and new opportunities. The purpose of this policy document is to address the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities this new technological environment presents. Challenges include protection of privacy rights, protection against inappropriate material, protection against excessive State and corporate control and increasing inequality while opportunities to be capitalised on include making access to Government services easier, increasing employment prospects and developing lifelong learning and education tailored to each individual need. The document concludes with a proposed digital Bill of Rights to ensure civil and human rights that apply in the real world also apply in the online world.

- Due to the huge technological advances over the last number of years, which have resulted in an explosive growth in data creation as well as massive changes in the way we interact socially, the Green Party believes in building on the enormous social and economic benefits the technological revolution presents as well as mitigating the risks posed by the misuse of personal data.

- We believe it is important to work with other countries in setting out fundamental rights and liberties on the Internet and enable us to thrive as confident citizens and consumers of the digital world.

- We will work to ensure a common sense balance between the right to privacy and freedom of expression in line with Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

- The Green Party believes in defending the right to self-determinism concerning digital rights and data protection rights. Individuals should have the right to know where their data is stored, what it's being used for and by whom is it being used as well as having the right to deletion of personal data.

- The Green Party believes it is important to encourage people to become digitally active citizens. We believe it is vital that Government takes the lead in this regard by ensuring that existing government services and websites are designed to be simple to use and easy to navigate, as well as provide citizens with a single point of access to a wide range of government services and benefits.

- We support Open Data Initiatives that are gaining momentum around the world by encouraging governments and organisations to make their information freely available and accessible online.

Digital Policy

- The Green Party believes that we should strive to create a truly inclusive digital society. We believe it is vitally important that Government services are updated to take advantage of the digital revolution. The library network, post office network and national broadcaster should be resourced and mandated to adapt and respond to the global technological environment.

- We believe that the Internet must continue to be built on transparent multi-stakeholder platforms. We will support the building of a cross-sector digital skills alliance and a national digital skills delivery plan.

- We support the creation of a citizen digital identity in collaboration with technology partners.

- We will work to ensure a secure and inexpensive broadband service is available to all parts of the country and ensure that marginalised members of our community can also reap the rewards associated with internet access and contribute to Ireland's expanding digital economy.

- The Green Party believes in providing greater taxation incentives to encourage people investing in technology and business start-ups.

2. Policy

2.1. Privacy

2.1.1. Current Trends

Revelations concerning the fallout from the Edward Snowden/NSA controversy, as well as the issues of concern emanating from scandals relating to GSOC, all strongly suggest the need for greater clarity and more robust rules and norms around issues of online surveillance and data protection breaches.

Countries such as North Korea, China and Iran have imposed limitations and restrictions on internet usage and access to certain websites. Whether the suggestions to fragment the internet into localised national versions are real or just political reactions to international stories of government-level spying, the evidence of mass surveillance and restrictive internet access strongly suggest the need for new norms, laws and practices concerning data privacy.

Whilst there is a need to put in place measures which project the most vulnerable members of our society, it is also important that we defend the right to self-determinism concerning our digital rights and data protection rights, as well as to oppose mass surveillance by protecting online privacy and security.

2.1.2. Decentralised Network

As a result of the fallout from the NSA/Snowden controversy, ITU (International Telecommunication Union, a UN Body) has in recent times been calling for greater control of the internet. Countries such as Brazil, China, and Russia want to see the ITU take greater control of the internet through a process of internet regulation which would give the ITU spam blocking capabilities.

However, evidence from the *Center for Democracy and Technology* suggests that the internet works better as a decentralised system of government, raising concerns for any framework that puts government in charge and leaves civil society out of the process. Whilst there are aspects of the internet which need to be investigated and handled accordingly, namely child abuse material, online bullying and other criminal material, there still, however, needs to be in place a level of protection from excessive state and corporate control of the internet.

2.1.3. Freedom to Communicate

International calls for a free, open and truly global internet such as the *Web We Want* campaign are encouraging individuals to stand up for their digital rights and to have the freedom to communicate and interact with the internet without restrictive access and the fear of being spied upon. To counteract mass surveillance and the potential threat of excessive government control, individuals should have the right to determine to what extent their online personal data may be used and manipulated by others. Furthermore, individuals should have the right to know where their data is stored, what it's being used for and by

whom is it being used. It is also important that there is a right to deletion of personal data, especially if it has been illegally stored and collected.

2.1.4. Protecting Citizen's Rights

To ensure a safe and free online environment, Data Protection must be viewed as a fundamental right. Both Dáil Éireann and the European Parliament need to implement solid data protection laws which protect the individual from nefarious online actions.

Moreover, the adoption of European Data Protection rules must include legislation which empowers the individual and protects them from the interests of organisations which collect and collate online data. The onus on how data is managed, stored and mined must be at the behest of the individual. Online services, businesses and providers must seek full permission and consent before they can fully utilise personal data in any form. Simply put, '*If you want my data, ask for my consent."* (Jan Philipp Albrecht European Greens - MEP).

Furthermore, citizens must have the right to move their information from one online service to another, rectify any errors and delete information permanently. Protection of privacy is viewed as being an important element to online security. National governments and international bodies and institutions need to strongly consider how the ever-changing technological environment is shaping the practices of international security agencies (*Electronic Frontier Foundation*).

The *Electronic Frontier Foundation* also espouses the right to freedom of expression and free speech, both of which are closely linked to the call for greater online privacy, by encouraging governments and internet intermediaries to take a stand against the increasing threat of online censorship.

Online monitoring of internet users poses a real risk to individual privacy *(Digital Rights Ireland)*. Current legislation concerning Privacy and Data Protection currently allow mobile phone companies and ISPs to monitor, observe and store personal information for up to two years. Data retention is *"a permanent threat throughout the data retention period to the right of citizens of the union to confidentiality in their private lives" (Pedro Cruz Villalón).*

Despite the current nature of the internet with its lack of borders and free flow of information, EU laws must exclusively apply to EU citizen's private online data regardless of where the business processing the data is based. Data cannot be transferred to third parties without legal basis in EU Law. Citizens must be put in a position whereby they can exert control over their personal information online. Online users cannot be duped into signing their data away, but must be asked explicitly and regularly if they agree to the processing of their private data, as well as having the right to erasure. To ensure full compliance, meaningful sanctions (up to 5% turnover) should act as a deterrent to any company or organisation wishing to break the law.

2.1.5. Decentralisation - A new Paradigm for Social Media

Initiatives such as the EU's Digital Me Project (www.dime-project.eu) are offering individuals the opportunity to control their online personal identity management through the development of technologies which offer a decentralised social network. By enabling online users to decide on which level of information they can show or make public, decentralising services and storage points will enable the user to take full control of their generated user knowledge. Furthermore, no one can gather or analyse personal data. Initiatives such as the Digital Me Project are providing online users with an opportunity to safely circumnavigate online storage points which they may be reluctant to fully trust.

2.1.6. Common Agreement – A Need for Dialogue

A solid common agreement regarding the exchange of data between the US and EU needs to be put in place. Together with its geographical location, burgeoning tech sector and proximity to Europe, Ireland is best placed as the meeting point between the EU and the USA to discuss issues of concern relating to international spying and mass surveillance. Many of the large online companies have chosen Ireland as the location for their European headquarters, and therefore Ireland is best placed to chair a discussion on the major issues concerning the individual, government, internet start-ups and the large multinational tech corporations.

2.1.7. Mediation

Mediation is an effective method of bringing various groups with different agendas together to discuss and resolve issues. Therefore, platforms like the *European Dialogue on Internet Governance* (EuroDIG) can be used as an open platform for inclusive discussion on matters relating to Internet Governance. The Internet is a vital platform for democracy and it has become an important tool for communication, providing the ability to bridge gaps and overcome divides between people and cultures around the world. The Internet must continue to be built on transparent multi stakeholder platforms, and we should strive to create a truly inclusive digital society.

2.2. DIGITAL INCLUSION

2.2.1. What is Digital Inclusion?

The right of all citizens regardless of age, social background and income to participate in the knowledge society.

2.2.2. Why the Need to Promote Digital Inclusion?

With the increased digitisation of society and the continuous movement of products and services to online platforms, it is becoming increasingly necessary to promote the benefits of 'going online' to those individuals who have yet to make the move. A solid and dependable broadband service is essential to Ireland's continued economic recovery, but having access to reliable digital services can also ensure that marginalised members of our community can also reap the rewards associated with internet access and contribute to Ireland's expanding digital economy.

Digital Inclusion is vitally important as it has the potential to increase people's education and employment prospects. Studies have suggested that home access to a computer and connection to the internet can improve a child's educational performance. Furthermore, internet access can also lead to an increase in household incomes and mobilise individuals to engage with members of their communities through various methods of online social engagement, thus creating greater citizenship and quality of life.

2.2.3. The Risk Posed by Digital Exclusion?

However, almost one in five adults in Ireland has never accessed the internet. Primarily older people, retirees, and the socially disadvantaged are the groups which are less likely to use the internet, but who can gain the most from availing of online services. Individuals who are not connected to the internet suffer the risk of having unequal access to information, reduced access to commercial opportunities, exclusion from digital interpersonal communications, and a poor level of access to online public services. When compared against individuals with regular internet access, digitally excluded citizens are more likely to be subjected to increased costs for goods and services. By ensuring everyone have some level of access to digital services, we can ensure that IT (Internet Communications Technology) can help to reduce social isolation, open up new economic opportunities and save significant taxpayer money.

2.3. Getting Citizens Online and Digitally Connected

2.3.1. Develop a One-stop Government Website

To encourage people to become digitally active citizens, it is vital that existing government services and websites are designed to be simple to use and easy to navigate. By providing citizens with a single point of access to a wide range of government services and benefits, we can increase internet usage among those least likely to avail of digital services. Bringing all Government of Ireland services into a single service delivery network can lead to a more digitally advanced society. In the UK, research indicates direct online interaction between citizens and government could generate savings of between £3.30 (€4.00) and £12.00 (€14.6) per transaction. If all digitally excluded adults got online and made just one digital contact each month instead of using another channel, this would produce an estimated annual saving of £900 million.

2.3.2. A Digital Identity

Recent studies have shown that older people in particular have great difficulties in engaging with government services online as a result of a lack of ICT skills and the need for continuous downloading, printing, signing and rescanning of documents. The creation of a citizen digital identity in collaboration with technology partners will eliminate the need for downloading and printing, thus increasing the efficiency of a one stop government website and creating an ease of use.

2.3.3. Intergenerational Computer & Internet Courses

Intergenerational training classes on a one to one basis in community centres, libraries, and health centres nationwide offer people the chance to learn directly from individuals more accustomed to computers and the internet. Furthermore, they promote the opportunity for peer learning and participatory training, both of which are highly valued and successful methods of training.

Recent UK research indicates the total potential economic benefit from getting everyone online is in excess of £22 billion (€27 Euro). It is therefore imperative that continued financial support and guidance be offered to intergenerational training campaigns such as Age Action's *Getting Started Programme*, which is aimed at people over the age of 55.

2.3.4. Nationwide Digital Skills and Training Platform

Create a Cross-Sector Partnership, which will build a cross-sector digital skills alliance and a national digital skills delivery plan. As an offshoot of the digital alliance, we should create web-based marketplace which aggregates all the best resources to help people improve their digital skills and to find relevant and timely information. The skills and training platform should also champion innovation by working closely with tech companies to come up with innovative app solutions which can enable individuals to gain confidence in using this new technology.

2.3.5. Public Community Spaces for Technology Use

Make better use of public spaces to encourage use of technology for community and collaboration purposes. Provide free, fast wi-fi and longer opening hours in public libraries. Moreover, create innovation hubs that are integrated within public libraries to facilitate hot-desking, presentation facilities and breakout rooms in order to facilitate group and individual learning and networking.

2.3.6. Post Offices as Digital Hubs

Work within the Post Office system in converting the post office network to act as new digital communications hubs within the community. They could be used to host servers to safely store digital archives for the community. They could also act as distribution points to deliver parcels and pick up products to ship to the rest of the world.

2.3.7. National Broadcaster as Digital Media Creative Hub

Mandate the national broadcaster to create state-of-the-art production facilities designed specifically for digital media creators to experiment and innovate content for their channels within the communities of Ireland. The new community hubs would feature the latest production and post-production digital video equipment, as well as workshops, seminars and events. They would be spaces for digital media creators to learn from industry experts and collaborate with other creators in the community.

2.4. OPEN DATA

2.4.1. What is Open Data?

Open data is a concept whereby certain datasets are made freely available to everyone to use and republish without restrictions from copyright patents or other mechanisms of control. Across the globe, Open Data Initiatives are gaining momentum by encouraging governments and organisations to make their information freely available and accessible online. For example, using Open Source data for *Transport for London*, smart Apps such as *BUSit* enable citizens to plan their bus journey in advance on their smart phone or at home on their PC or laptop.

2.4.2. The Benefits of Open Data

Open Data enables individuals and organisations to develop new insights and innovations which can improve the lives of others and improve the flow of information within and between countries. It has the potential to empower local communities, as well as to help small and medium businesses identify new opportunities.

By creating the opportunity for increased transparency between citizens and government, Open Data can empower individuals and businesses to create better and more innovative outcomes in public services. Freely available government datasets can be used to create useful tools and services which can be of benefit in areas such as health, education, and the environment.

Open Data has strong economic potential. Research suggests that Open Data could generate more than $3 trillion a year worldwide(McKinsey Report) by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of existing processes; making possible new products, services, and markets; and creating value for individual consumers and citizens.

2.4.3. Making Open Data a Reality

Already within Ireland there is a burgeoning group of community leaders, software engineers, and designers who want to make a positive change by bringing together people, technology and ideas for the betterment and improved efficiency of community services.

Initiatives such as *Code for Ireland* are of crucial benefit when it comes to connecting developers with government agencies and nationwide communities to create workable solutions which can mobilise the citizen to engage with local and national government to create better services.

However, current endeavours like *Code for Ireland* are hampered by current legislation which curtails the use of non-sensitive aggregated datasets. Ireland needs to ensure its place at the forefront of the data revolution by ensuring more and more datasets are placed into the public domain, thus creating the opportunity for economic growth and social cohesion. Open Data has the potential to help individuals make better decisions about their own life and to become more active in their own community.

Data generated by government is in essence public data. However, the cost to the individual to obtain information under Freedom of Information Act is seen as a deterrent to accessing data. Therefore it is imperative that all fees and charges are waived so that greater accessibility to useful datasets can be achieved. The financial benefits to free and open datasets to the national economy are potentially massive. In the UK alone, the move towards an Open Data Directive in terms of reuse of public data will create 58,000 jobs by 2017 and will add £216 billion to the British economy (Centre for Economic and Business Research).

2.4.4. Permanent and Independent CTO

To further create a workable Open Data system in Ireland, government needs to put in place a permanent Chief Technical Officer (CTO) with the requisite skills and technical knowledge to implement a solid and dependable Open Data strategy for Ireland. The major role of the CTO will be to establish the appropriate channels between the interested groups, as well as to nurture creative ways in which IT and government data can be utilised for the benefit of the community. The appointment of an independent CTO will help to highlight the benefits of OD to the gatekeepers and holders of these datasets.

At a national level, all aspects and areas of national and local government need to get involved in Open Data. Local councils need to eradicate the red tape and bureaucracy which currently prevents the full and obtainable use of non-sensitive datasets.

2.4.5. Outcomes

By further strengthening the existing channels and by putting in place solid procedures and individuals with industry expertise and digital know-how, we can help create a situation whereby government can make its data more commonly available and Open-by-Default. This in turn can lead to an increase in civic participation in decision making, tackle corruption and harness new technologies which improve governance.

For the first time in the history of the State, the push towards Open Data will create an unprecedented level of transparency and accessibility to government, and create a safe, convenient and flexible exchange of private, government and corporate data, as well as a prosperous environment for business and entrepreneurship. Open Data can help to prevent the problems of the past from reoccurring, such as the provision of open data relating to planning, as well as the current development of an app which provides a list of all NAMA properties, thus affording people in local communities to make informed choices when deciding on locations for potential business locations.

2.5. Opportunity

2.5.1. Employment Prospects

The UK's former digital champion, Martha Lane Fox, identified the strategic importance of the internet in securing Britain's future economic growth. Lane Fox suggested that a lack of fundamental digital skills were holding back the growth potential of small businesses. Furthermore, improving people's IT skills had the potential to help them to improve their

employment prospects, increase wages and subsequently boost the finances of the national economy.

Unemployed people who get online could increase their chances of getting employment with an estimated lifetime benefit of over £12,000 for every person moved into employment. If 3½% of the digitally excluded found a job by getting online, it would deliver a net economic benefit of £560 million.

In the UK, people with good ICT skills earn between 3% and 10% more than people without such skills. If the currently digitally excluded employed people got online, each of them would increase their earnings by an average of over £8,300 in their lifetime and deliver between £560 million and £1,680 million of overall economic benefit. As well as contributing towards the national economy, encouraging more businesses and people to upgrade or develop their IT skills can also reduce the cost of providing non digital services.

2.5.2. Connecting Business & Increasing Digital Skillsets

The provision of services such as *Getting Irish Business Online* are helping small and medium services to create their own online platform. However, services like this, which are managed by large multinational digital corporations, need the direct support from local and national government. The sharing of information among colleagues, businesses and even cities is viewed as being crucial to the success of online endeavours.

Training Programs such as GO-ON.UK have in recent times successfully reduced the number of 'offliners' through the development of a national delivery plan focussing on a number   of   key   principles:

- Developing a cross-sector digital skills alliance and a national digital skills delivery plan.

- Developed a web-based marketplace: Aggregating all the best resources to help people improve their digital skills.

- Champion innovation: Providing practical advice and best practice sharing for partners.

- Challenging the tech companies to come up with some intuitive app based solutions.

- Working with local partners such as local councils, post offices, running events offering training.

Their pilot program in Liverpool successfully reduced the total offline population by 50% within a six month period.

Digitalskills.com, an offshoot of *GO-ON.UK*, provides British businesses with information and guidance on how to get a business online, use government services and improve basic skillsets. It also is a platform to share ideas, and enables individuals to become their own digital champion by helping others to get online.

2.5.3. What needs to be done?

It is necessary to help develop and nurture businesses to help them develop a solid online presence. In order to do this successfully, it is necessary to adopt an open and collaborative approach which, *"develops, supports, and stewards legal and technical infrastructure that maximises digital creativity, sharing and innovation."(Creative Commons)* As well as that, innovators need to be protected from established businesses which use the law to stifle creativity and kill competition.

2.5.4. Tax Relief

Greater taxation incentives need to be introduced to encourage people investing in technology and business start-ups and in order to free up much needed business capital. Drawing from the recommendations of Start-up Ireland[1], we propose changes in PAYE and PRSI for entrepreneurs, changes to the CGT system for entrepreneurs and consolidation and simplification of the Employment and Investment Incentive (EII), Seed Capital Scheme (SCS) and Entrepreneurial Relief, the three major tax reliefs in place in Ireland to support start-ups in order to allow capital to be reinvested and create additional jobs.

2.6. EDUCATION

2.6.1. Uversity: A new method of Digital Learning

Online digital technology is now viewed as an enabler, and it is providing students with the opportunity to tailor third level education to suit their own needs. Leading universities, institutes of technology and independent colleges across the island of Ireland have founded *Uversity* in order to advance creative education. *Uversity* puts students in control of their education within a learning framework that promotes individuality and creative difference. Students can design a personalised programme by choosing modules that are offered by a range of universities and institutions.

In essence, the uversity model of education is paving the way forward in e-learning and training. As education is diversifying, students can now pick and choose modules in a manner which was not previously available. By harnessing the global reach of the internet and further developing models such as uversity, we can ensure that educational opportunities can reach all members of the community.

1

http://startupireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/StartupIreland-Pre-Budget-Submission-2014-Google-Docs.pdf

2.7. Digital Bill of Rights

2.7.1. Background

There have been huge technological advances over the last number of years. These include a massive change in the way we interact socially and an explosive growth in data creation. These changes have brought enormous social and economic benefits, but they have also created an array of opportunities for the misuse of personal data, whether by public authorities, criminals, or commercial interests. The time has come to set out the fundamental rights and liberties that will protect us and enable us to thrive as confident citizens and consumers of the digital world[2]. Below is a working draft of a Bill of Rights to be updated in collaboration with technology partners, civil society and Government and business.

2.7.2. Bill of Rights

Personal Control - Individuals have the right to exert control over their data, including the right to control how online companies collect personal data and the purpose for which it has been collected.

Unambiguous Language and Transparency - Terms of data usage should be succinct, clear and easy to understand. Individuals have the right to understandable information concerning privacy and data usage. Users should receive understandable information on how their data is being processed.

Context - Data can only be used in the context in which it was provided by the provider. It cannot be re-supplied or manipulated by data collectors without formal consent.

Consent - Online users cannot be duped into signing away control of their private data, but must be asked explicitly and regularly if they agree to their data being processed. Individuals must be informed as to the fate of their data. Website owners should only allow track users if the privacy settings on the browser signal that the user agrees. Individuals must provide consent before data is transferred to third countries.

Security - Personal data should be protected by reasonable security safeguards against such risks as loss or unauthorised access, destruction, misuse, modification or disclosure of data.

Digital Data Access Request (DDAR) - Individuals have the right to ascertain the level of personal information held on data companies' servers and to establish the purpose for data storage. Data companies should complete DDARs within 21 days of notice. Furthermore, governments requesting data from internet service providers must be compelled to limit their request to specific investigations and people who are deemed to be involved in illegal activity.

Amendment of personal information - Personal information should be accurate, complete and kept up-to-date to the extent necessary for the purposes of use.

2

  □ http://www.libdems.org.uk/protecting-your-data-online-with-a-digital-rights-bill

Right to erasure and deletion - Data users have the right to enact the permanent deletion of their personal data.

Limits on Personal Data Collection - The collection of personal information should be limited to information that is relevant to the purposes of collection, and any such information should be obtained by lawful and fair means. Governments must contact online service providers directly when requesting data.

Accountability - Online data companies should be held to account concerning any mismanagement or inappropriate use of personal data.

Protection of personal identity - User personal information must be pseudonymised when large datasets are combined and analysed.

Free and Open Access - Citizens have the right to use the internet to share their work and creativity freely and without the need for excessive copyright restriction. Lenient copyright control measures can instigate free access to academic knowledge, promote creativity and empower the individual to build upon existing work.

END

Document Control

Version:

Version	Project Phase	Date Released	Contributor(s)	Description
1.0	A		Donal Kerr	Draft Submitted to PC for discussion
2.0	A	June 2015	Tom Kenny	Draft Submitted to PC for discussion
3.0	A	13 Oct 2015	Tom Kenny	Approved by Policy Council in Oct 2015
4.0	A	23.10.2015	Tom Kenny	Summary & Key Points added and footnote on tax relief added.

Approval:

Approved by	Position in Party	Date Approved

Distribution List:

Distributed to	Email Address	Date