

**CITIZENSHIP IN THE ELECTRONICALLY
NETWORKED CITY**

**A thesis submitted to the University of
Manchester for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Humanities**

2011

JENNI VILHELMIINA VIITANEN

School of Environment and Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	7
LIST OF TABLES.....	8
ABBREVIATIONS	9
ABSTRACT	10
DECLARATION	11
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	12
1 INTRODUCTION	13
2 THE CITY AND THE NETWORK SOCIETY	18
2.1 Introduction to the Network Society.....	18
2.1.1 The space of flows versus the space of places – a new social order	19
2.1.2 The resulting condition - spatial transformation.....	19
2.2 Local government in the space of flows	20
2.3 The Network Society from a critical perspective	22
2.3.1 Technology and agency	23
2.4 Bridging or deepening digital (social and economic) divides?	25
2.5 The New Economy	27
2.5.1 The microchip and macroeconomics	28
2.5.2 All things 2.0.....	29
2.5.3 Government 2.0.....	32
2.6 A democratic network society	33
2.6.1 Models of democracy and the democratic deficit	34
2.6.2 Citizenship.....	35
2.7 Governance	38
2.7.1 Power in the Network Society.....	41
2.8 The information age city.....	42
2.8.1 Scales of the knowledge-driven economy: the rise of regions and city-regions	43
2.8.2 Inter-urban competition.....	43
2.8.3 Connectivity as urban strategy	45
2.8.4 ICTs weave inequality into the urban fabric	46
2.8.5 Bridging digital divides	47
2.8.6 Urban policy interventions	49
2.9 Chapter summary	50

3	TECHNOLOGIES OF THE STATE	52
3.1	Introduction.....	52
3.2	Theorising technology implementation.....	52
3.2.1	Managerial rationalism in local government.....	53
3.2.2	Three theories of technology implementation	54
3.2.3	The values of technology development.....	57
3.3	Defining e-government.....	58
3.3.1	E-government typologies.....	59
3.4	Local Government Modernisation Agenda 1997- 2009	62
3.4.1	Citizenship in the Local Government Modernisation Agenda (LGMA)	63
3.5	A long decade: from Government Direct to Directgov	69
3.5.1	Introduction	69
3.5.2	Local e-government.....	72
3.5.3	Transformation transformed?	73
3.5.4	Measuring performance before and after 2005.....	76
3.5.5	The question of take-up: have-nots and will-nots.....	77
3.6	The promise and problems of e-government.....	79
3.6.1	Citizens as customers of e-government.....	80
3.6.2	E-democracy and trust deficit	82
3.6.3	Factors influencing citizen take-up of e-government.....	83
3.7	Chapter summary	84
4	METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN.....	87
4.1	Introduction.....	87
4.1.1	Key themes from literature.....	87
4.1.2	Conceptual framework.....	89
4.1.3	Aim, objectives and key research questions	91
4.1.4	Epistemology - socially constructed knowledge	95
4.2	Research design.....	96
4.2.1	Case study with benchmarking.....	96
4.2.2	The single case study.....	100
4.2.3	Benchmarking as a method	101
4.3	Methods.....	105
4.3.1	Validity in mixed methods research	105
4.3.2	Research instruments.....	106
4.3.3	Quantitative methods.....	107
4.3.4	Qualitative methods.....	109
4.3.5	Research instruments in the benchmarking study	113
4.3.6	Three core themes	115

5	BENCHMARKING.....	117
5.1	Introduction.....	117
5.2	E-government in Europe.....	117
5.2.1	Lisbon Strategy – a European knowledge economy	117
5.2.2	Post-Lisbon Europe.....	119
5.3	Why (next generation) broadband?.....	120
5.3.1	Internet/ broadband use “what makes Europeans click?”	121
5.3.2	Digital divides in Europe	124
5.3.3	EU benchmarking summary	126
5.4	Helsinki benchmarking context	127
5.4.1	Introduction to Finland	127
5.4.2	A fiercely independent municipal sector.....	128
5.5	Helsinki city-region.....	129
5.5.1	Introduction	130
5.5.2	Helsinki's IT strategy	131
5.5.3	Metropolis vision and city image	131
5.5.4	Participation and feedback online	133
5.5.5	Invest to save	135
5.5.6	Customer centricity and international convergence	136
5.5.7	Who remains under the flyover bridges of the information superhighway?	137
5.6	Kontula neighbourhood.....	139
	(source: author)	140
5.6.1	Pilot user survey.....	140
5.6.2	Making channel choices	141
5.6.3	Focus group	143
5.7	Benchmarking summary	147
5.7.1	Reflection on spatial transformation in the Network Society.....	149
6	FLAGSHIPS AND PADDLEBOATS – DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT IN MANCHESTER.....	151
6.1	Introduction.....	151
6.1.1	Manchester: a tale of two cities.....	151
6.2	From Cottonopolis to Ideopolis	152
6.2.1	The rise, fall and rebirth of the world's first industrial conurbation	154
6.2.2	The city-regional momentum 2009 onwards	155
6.2.3	From municipal socialism to urban boosterism	156
6.3	The emergence of the digital development agenda.....	158
6.3.1	Radical roots	160

6.4	Digital development goes arms-length	164
6.4.1	Municipal digital infrastructure: from pipedreams to pipes in the ground	165
6.4.2	Response to Cushman and Wakefield's cities monitor	171
6.5	Summary: sink or swim	173
7	TURNING THE SUPERTANKER AROUND – TRANSFORMING THE CITY COUNCIL	176
7.1	Introduction	176
7.2	The Manchester Improvement Programme (MIP)	177
7.2.1	MIP organisation and finances	181
7.2.2	Ward coordination	183
7.3	Access Manchester	183
7.3.1	Environment on Call – a phased approach to CRM	184
7.3.2	The Website Improvement Project.....	186
7.3.3	The web channel and CRM – the missing link	188
7.4	Green shoots	191
7.4.1	Sharing spatially sensitive information	191
7.4.2	Manchester Libraries	192
7.5	The root of the problem.....	194
7.5.1	Technology is the easy part.....	194
7.5.2	Strategic mismatch and managerial rationalism.....	195
7.5.3	Lack of (shared) understanding about citizens.....	197
7.6	Summary: the customer is king?	200
7.6.1	Customers, choice and privatisation	200
7.6.2	Reflections on managerial rationalism	203
8	CITIZENS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS.....	206
8.1	Introduction.....	206
8.2	Speaking volumes: National Take-up study	207
8.2.1	Introduction	207
8.2.2	Analysis and findings.....	208
8.2.3	Comparison with EoC in Manchester.....	209
8.3	Manchester City Council's 'Listening to your views' Best Value survey 2006/07	211
8.3.1	Introduction	211
8.3.2	Data analysis.....	211
8.3.3	Opinions on the quality of the interaction, trustworthiness and effectiveness of the Council.....	212
8.3.4	Population characteristics.....	216
8.3.5	“Contacting the Council” customer survey 2008	220
8.4	Summary of the National Take-up study and MCC Best Value survey ..	220

8.5	'What makes you click?'	222
8.5.1	Introduction to the neighbourhoods: Wythenshawe and Levenshulme	222
8.5.2	Characterising the neighbourhoods	226
8.5.3	Focus groups	228
8.5.4	In touch with the council	242
8.6	Summary	244
8.6.1	'E' for empowerment?	246
9	DOES A RISING TIDE LIFT ALL BOATS?	248
9.1	Introduction	248
9.1.1	Research design	248
9.2	A tangled web: spatial transformation and disaggregation in the Network Society	249
9.2.1	The knowledge economy is a dual economy	249
9.2.2	Delegated democracy	250
9.3	Two super-narratives in local government ICT policy	253
9.3.1	Super-narrative 1: Economic growth and social inclusion	254
9.3.2	Super-narrative 2: Efficiency and customer-centricity	255
9.3.3	The dismal science of economics	256
9.3.4	What happened to the democratic ideals?	257
9.4	Benchmarking lessons	260
9.4.1	International indicators	260
9.4.2	Nordic network society	261
9.5	Managing customer relations at the Manchester City Council	264
9.5.1	Customer Relationship Management	264
9.5.2	Managerial rationality	265
9.5.3	Citizen-consumer dilemma	266
9.6	Looking forward	268
9.6.1	Urban service delivery in an age of austerity	268
9.6.2	Metropolitan trend: agglomeration and economies of scale	270
9.6.3	A peek into the future	270
10	CONCLUSIONS	275
10.1	Aim and objectives	275
10.1.1	Drawing conclusions	276
10.2	Wanted: a new democratic geography	279
10.3	Policy recommendations	281
10.4	Reflections on the research	282
11	BIBLIOGRAPHY	284

Word count 84556

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Home access to the Internet 1998-2000	70
Figure 2: Key e-Government policy milestones in the UK since 1996 ..	71
Figure 3: Conceptual framework	90
Figure 4: The case study construct with benchmark	104
Figure 5: Focus Group flyer “What makes you click?”	113
Figure 6: i2010 objectives	119
Figure 7: E-government supply (light bar) and citizen demand (dark bar)	123
Figure 8: Internet penetration in the UK by socio-economic group and age.....	126
Figure 9: Number of Finnish Municipalities 1920 - 2010	129
Figure 10: Helsinki City-Region (14 municipalities) and Helsinki Metropolitan Area (4 municipalities)	130
Figure 11: Kontupiste ICT hub interior	140
Figure 12: Lunch after the focus group	144
Figure 13: Map of Greater Manchester Authorities	153
Figure 14: “The Corridor”	168
Figure 15: Corridor Partnership “FttP metropolitan network”	170
Figure 16: The strategic governance context of MCC and the MIP	178
Figure 17: Volumes of EoC customer contact by channel, January – March 2008 and 2010	190
Figure 18: Volumes of “applications for service” and “provision of information” for five local authority environmental services in England by channel (telephone, face-to-face, internet) September 2006 – January 2007.....	209
Figure 19: Volumes of EoC customer contact by channel, January – March 2008 and 2010 with percentage change	210
Figure 20: “n” and % of respondents across the monitored channels	212
Figure 21: “Satisfaction with the final outcome of the contact” (recoded)*	214
Figure 22: “Is the Council efficient and well run”	214
Figure 23: “Is the Council trustworthy” (recoded)*	215
Figure 24: “How well does the Council keep residents informed about the services and benefits it provides”	215
Figure 25: “How Satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the opportunities for participation in local decision making?” (recoded)*	216
Figure 26: “Channel choice by employment status” (recoded)*	217
Figure 27: “Channel choice by tenure”*	218
Figure 28: “Channel choice by age”	218
Figure 29: “Channel choice by age” recoded*	219
Figure 30: Manchester Districts.....	223
Figure 31: Wythenshawe Forum.....	225
Figure 32: Levenshulme Library.....	225
Figure 33: Percentage of residents contacting the Council by frequency of contact.....	243

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: A typology of e-government	59
Table 2: A typology of citizen-initiated e-government interaction	61
Table 3: Types of citizenship and democracy in neighbourhood governance	64
Table 4: Comparative information about Manchester and Helsinki	99
Table 5: The research timeline	100
Table 6: Manchester interviews	111
Table 7: Benchmarking interviews	114
Table 8: Research thematic framework, chapterisation and objectives	115
Table 9: “Eurostat individual and enterprises information society indicators 2008”	122
Table 10: “E-government availability and individuals using the internet for interacting with public authorities 2008 and e-government availability”	122
Table 11: Places of access to the internet	125
Table 12: Service Improvement Project original groupings as at July 2005	180

ABBREVIATIONS

AGMA	Association of Greater Manchester Authorities
CIDS	Manchester Creative Industries Development Services
CLG, DLCG	(Department for) Communities and Local Government,
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CSR	Comprehensive Spending Review
CTU	Central Technology Unit (Manchester City Council)
DTLR	Department for Transport and Local Government and Regions
EC	European Commission
ENoLL	European Network of Living Labs
EoC	Environment On Call (contact centre, Manchester City Council)
EPC	Economic and Planning Centre (Helsinki City Council)
Esd-toolkit	Electronic service delivery toolkit (for local government)
EU	European Union
FP	Framework Programme
FttH	Fibre to the Home
FtP	Fibre to the Premises
HCC	Helsinki City Council
ICT(s)	Information and Communication Technology/ies
IDeA	(Local Government) Improvement and Development Agency
IEG	Implementing Electronic Government
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
IT	Information Technology (often used interchangeably with ICT)
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LGMA	Local Government Modernisation Agenda
MAA	Multiple Area Agreement
Mbps	Megabytes per second (bandwidth)
MCC	Manchester City Council
MDDA	Manchester Digital Development Agency
MIP	Manchester Improvement Programme
NGA	Next Generation Access (fast broadband delivered via optic fibres)
NI	National Indicator
NPM	New Public Management
NWDA	North West Development Agency (abolished in 2010)
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OeE	Office of the e-Envoy
PIAP	Public Internet Access Point
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
SAP	Systems, Applications and Products (in data processing)
SMARTiP	Smart Metropolitan Areas Realised Through Innovation & People
SOCITM	Society of IT Managers
WEF	World Economic Forum
WKCI	World Knowledge Competitiveness Index

ABSTRACT

This research contributes to the debate about the impacts of ICTs on the business of local government. It conceptualises the city as a site of local governance where ICTs have an impact on the social, political and economic complexities. Indeed, the starting point of this research is the widely held view that technology holds promise to alleviate both economic and democratic challenges faced by local government today.

The conceptual framework combines Manuel Castells' Network Society with theories of democracy, governance and citizenship, as well as the so-called 'new economy'. Furthermore, the role and purpose of e-government is explored from the citizen/user perspective. Technology implementation in local government is contrasted combining the 'top-down' perspective of policy-makers with 'bottom-up' experiences of frontline officers and citizens. The research design is a case study of the City of Manchester with European benchmarking perspectives.

The research found that whilst technology offers promise in theory, its implementation in a real context rarely fulfils that potential from an economic efficiency or democratic engagement perspective. It is concluded that ICTs are often used to trigger a desired behaviour related to the local government modernisation policy agenda. However, a lack of clarity and shared understanding between managers, users and citizens about the purpose of that technology lead to patchy implementation and poor take-up. Furthermore, the justification for new technology is often based on managerial and narrow values steeped in assumptions about rationality, economic efficiency or competitiveness. These managerial priorities are often camouflaged with a broader discourse of empowerment or inclusion, or sold as 'must haves' for which there is no alternative. Overall, in Manchester it is found that ICTs tend to increase the distance between the local government service provider and the user (citizen) as access channels are made 'corporate'. Moreover, the fragmented and atomised nature of communities is highlighted through the use of modern ICTs when the primary motives are to do with the interests of the private consumer-citizen.

However, the benchmarking case study discovered that there can be alternatives and that citizens are more likely to adopt online access channels if they have higher levels of trust towards local government. The research concludes that local government should take their democratic governance role equally seriously as its economic governance role in designing and implementing technology. Incorporating broader democratic values into ICT policy and programmes is likely to broaden the appeal among the citizens, as well as steer the unknown 'spin-offs' and consequences of new technology in the direction of collective, public interest rather than individual, private interest. Democratic governance and socially inclusive policy-making serve as an insurance policy against the risks (e.g. in the field of privacy, economic viability, accountability) in the future electronically networked city.

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

- i. The author of this thesis (including appendices and/or schedules to this thesis) own certain copyright or related rights in it (the "Copyright") and s/he has given the University of Manchester certain rights to use such Copyright, including for administrative purposes.
- ii. Copies of this thesis, either in full or in extracts and whether in hard or electronic copy, may be made only in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended) and regulations issued under it, or where appropriate, in accordance with licensing agreements which the University has from time to time. This page must form part of such copies made.
- iii. The ownership of certain Copyright, patents, designs, trade marks and other intellectual property (the "Intellectual Property") and any reproductions of copyright works in the thesis, for example graphs and tables ("Reproductions"), which may be described in this thesis, may not be owned by the author and may be owned by third parties. Such Intellectual Property and Reproductions cannot and must not be made available for use without the prior written permission of the owner(s) of the relevant Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions.
- iv. Further information in the conditions under which disclosure, publication and commercialisation of this thesis, the Copyright and Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions described in it may take place is available in the University IP Policy (see <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/policies/intellectual-property.pdf>) in any relevant Thesis restriction declarations deposited in the University Library, The University Library's regulations (see <http://manchester.ac.uk/library/aboutus/regulations>) and in the University's policy on presentation of Theses.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was undertaken under the auspices of an Economic and Social Research Council PhD CASE (Collaborative Award in Science and Engineering) award in partnership with Manchester Digital Development Agency (MDDA). The scholarship made this research possible; a big thank you goes to those involved in that process and having faith in me in delivering this research, especially my supervisor Richard Kingston. The fruitful partnership between the University of Manchester and MDDA came to being thanks to their foresight and brilliance of Richard and Dave Carter, Head of MDDA. Thanks also to the academic co-supervisor Jon Coaffee. This research benefited greatly from their expertise and input, as well as that of the skilled and thoughtful examiners, Alan Southern from the University of Liverpool and Cecilia Wong from the University of Manchester.

Doctoral research is a lonely job, yet no one can do a PhD on their own. I owe thanks to numerous people, too many to name here individually. My great colleagues, past and present, at the School of Environment and Development as well as at MDDA helped me make sense of and survive the doctoral student experience. Thanks also to all the people who alongside their busy jobs took time to talk to me about this research and shared their insights in both Manchester and Helsinki. The citizens who volunteered for the research also deserve credit. Without their participation, there would be no thesis on citizenship in the electronically networked city.

In the tapestry of life, the PhD is a small thing, yet it will always be a 'big thing' for me not the least because of the tumultuous period it marks in my personal life. A handful of very special people supported me throughout - you know who you are. Without being able to share this journey with you the award would be a hollow achievement. I thank you all for giving me space when I needed it, and being there when it mattered most. In the words of Victor Hugo: *"The supreme happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved - loved for ourselves, or rather, loved in spite of ourselves"*.

This work is dedicated to life's exits and entrances during this period; the memory of my father Pekka Viitanen (1944-2008) and the arrival of my nephews Aaro and Lauri.

1 INTRODUCTION

The world's population is increasingly urban. Cities are the locus of much socio-technologically manifested change which permeates citizens' livelihoods, wellbeing and social relations. Cities are important sites of democratic engagement too, historically as well as in the present day. Cities are where citizens exercise their democratic rights as part of everyday life, and it is where the majority of public services are produced and consumed. Cities are arguably important for democratic accountability.

The advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is said to have transformed the relationship between the global and local economically as well as socially. Global capitalism affects the way in which cities function not only in the private sphere of business and consumerism, but also in the field of governance. Local democracy, too, could be changing as a result. This is an important area of research, given that the so-called democratic deficit is a going concern for contemporary decision-makers and citizens.

The theory of the Network Society (Castells, 1996) posits that representative democracy, particularly at the scale of the nation-state, is in decline. Simultaneously, regions, particularly city-regions, appear to be gaining momentum and relevance driven by economic theories of agglomeration. The economy of the post-industrial, globalised information age has been described as something 'new' or 'knowledge based' (e.g. Hildreth, 2007; Parkinson, 2005; Thrift, 2002).

This research is an exploration of the city as a site of democratic and economic governance, and it engages in a debate about the impacts of ICTs in the business of local government through a case study of the City of Manchester with European benchmarking perspectives. The conceptual framework combines Castells' assertions about the Network Society with theories of the new economy, democracy and governance. Empirically, the research is focused on technology implementation in local government combining the 'top-down' perspective of policy-makers with 'bottom-up' experiences of frontline officers and citizens.

The research questions are constructed around the two-pronged technology agenda pursued by the city; ICTs promise to offer solutions for economic efficiency and growth as well as social inclusion and democratic engagement. ICTs are linked to

urban policy and local economic development, addressing issues of digital (and social) inclusion; also to the Local Government Modernisation Agenda (LGMA), largely concerned with the efficiency of public service delivery. In policy terms, the two agendas are popularly referred to as 'digital development' and 'e-government'.

The temporal dimension of this research spans the 'long decade' of the New Labour government (1997-2010), during which 'citizen-centric' or 'joined-up' service delivery was made one of the core pillars of modernisation (e.g. Cowell and Martin, 2003; Corry and Parker, 2005). This topic straddles the envisaged twin aims of technology, referring to the democratizing and efficiency impacts.

This period can be divided into three main phases. In the first half the long decade the National Strategy for Local e-government (ODPM, 2002) was the main policy framework for technological change in local government, which focussed heavily on central targets and the 2005 deadline of achieving 100% e-enablement in public service delivery. In 2005 the focus shifted slightly as the UK Digital Strategy (Cabinet Office and DTI, 2005) and Transformational Government Agenda (Cabinet Office, 2005), the latter associated with Sir David Varney, were launched. E-government became primarily a tool for efficiency and corporately led change towards a more business-like public sector. After the onset of the global recession from the second quarter of 2008, a new policy direction was set in motion. The *Digital Britain* final report (BIS/ DCMS, 2009) is argued to coincide with this sea-change in policy whereby digital development finally came to the fore, epitomised by the national debate on broadband as a universal service commitment, a trend detectable also outside the UK. At the same time, the knowledge economy and furthermore, the digital economy, entered mainstream political lexicon both in the UK and in the European Union.

In terms of urban policy, the race to adopt high speed data infrastructure as a way to stay competitive in the global marketplace is arguably rooted in entrepreneurial urbanism and thus neoliberal practices, raising questions about the benefits of ICT/broadband adoption for local residents and communities. Indeed, studies in the UK have questioned the impact of ICT-led regeneration on social inclusion (e.g. Slack and Williams, 2000; Southern, 2002). Simultaneously, e-government implementation has been efficiency-driven and prone to a one-dimensional view of the citizen as a customer, thus reinforcing the central tenets of New Public Management (Dunleavy *et al*, 2006). However, internet-based technologies divide opinion and commentators make arguments both for and against, with user-driven

'Web 2.0' giving second wind to the 'optimists' in terms of the democratic, anti-capitalist and empowering opportunities offered by ICT (e.g. Leadbeater, 2008).

Digital development and e-government are traditionally discussed in separate domains of academic literature and research, a fact which is reflected in local government policy and practice, too. This research aims to bridge this 'digital divide' by drawing these two concepts together. It aims to take a fresh look at the relevance of ICT in local government combining the efficiency argument with the grassroots perspective, arguing that there is a paradox of supply and demand in e-government.

Contrasting with findings from the benchmarking research in Helsinki where citizen take-up of e-government is among the highest in Europe, the case study of the iconic entrepreneurial city of Manchester seeks to make a contribution to the understanding of the potential and limitations of ICT for local government vis-à-vis citizens. The policy relevance of this topic is underscored by the current fiscal contraction and unprecedented austerity measures faced by public services.

This research has the following aim and objectives:

Aim

The overall aim of the research is to examine the balance between the economic and social imperatives of technology development in the electronically networked city, through the lens of citizenship. With reference to the theory of the Network Society, the role of local government is investigated vis-à-vis citizens.

Objectives

- 1) To examine local government ICT strategies and how they link with wider urban governance.
- 2) To explore how city services are delivered to, and accessed by, citizens in a local e-government environment.
- 3) To undertake a benchmarking study (of objectives 1 and 2) in a European context.
- 4) To establish the extent to which e-government mechanisms are successful in delivering the economic and social 'twin aims' of technology relating to service improvement and enabling local participation and empowerment.
- 5) To make policy recommendations emanating from the case study and the benchmarking exercise.

Chapter outline

This thesis is divided into ten chapters. After this introduction, relevant academic literature and policy is reviewed in chapters 2 and 3. The former introduces the theory of the Network Society, and how it may be played out in the economy, democratic governance and citizenship. Furthermore, the trajectory of urban policy is reviewed, finishing with a perspective on how urban policy has responded to ICTs.

Chapter 3 focuses on e-government, starting with an introduction to the theory of technology implementation in local government. Next, a discussion on the Local Government Modernisation Agenda (LGMA) of New Labour is followed by an e-government policy review in the UK. The concluding part of chapter 3 offers a review of academic research in this field, with a perspective on citizen demand for e-government.

Chapter 4 details the methodology used for the main case study in Manchester and the European benchmark in Helsinki. The research design incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods, and the case for social constructivism as the epistemological foundation of the research is made.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the benchmarking research, starting with European policy trends and finishing with an analysis of Helsinki's approach to ICT development and citizenship. The benchmarking also asks why Finns are among the most active e-government users in Europe.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 focus on the main case study of Manchester. Chapter 6 introduces the case study discussing the governance of the city-region, and explains how digital development emerged and matured in Manchester as a strategy for economic development and social inclusion. Chapter 7 details Manchester City Council's approach to transformation enabled by technology, highlighting the difficulties it has encountered along that journey, and how this transformation impacts on the City Council's relationship with the citizens. Together chapters 6 and 7 provide a 'top down' view of technology in the city from the perspective of policy makers.

Chapter 8 focuses on a bottom-up perspective on Manchester's e-government offer. It scopes citizen demand for e-channels and investigates what factors might affect citizen choices through secondary analysis of administrative and survey data.

Chapter 8 also reports the results of primary research in two Manchester neighbourhoods, Wythenshawe and Levenshulme, where citizens' views and experiences were investigated in two focus groups.

Chapter 9 discusses the research findings in light of the conceptual framework, and develops arguments which are taken forward in the conclusions offered in chapter 10.

2 THE CITY AND THE NETWORK SOCIETY

2.1 Introduction to the Network Society

The theory of the Network Society (Castells, 1996) is a synthesis of a vast amount of empirical evidence about social phenomena which are linked with (electronic) networks, and it has been described as a highly flexible framework that can be adapted to reflect new empirical research (Marcuse, 2002; Stalder, 2006). Indeed even those who take an opposing view to Castells' arguments acknowledge his achievements as a pioneer attempting to explain the *"contemporary dynamics transforming the fabric of everyday life around the globe... It provides the single most comprehensive framework through which to connect, in an integrated analysis, very diverse phenomena"* (Stalder, 2006, p.1). However, as pointed out by many of the critics of the Network Society thesis, it is an attempt towards a sociological 'macrotheory' or a 'metanarrative'. Due to this complexity and ambiguity it arguably becomes a duty for anyone who wishes to build on it to draw boundaries around this 'metanarrative' and identify the scope within which the theory is intended to be used.

From this perspective, the implications of the Network Society on the urban economy, democracy, citizenship and governance at the local scale are explored – areas which are of central concern in what might be termed the 'electronically networked city'.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical underpinnings of the research in two main tranches: firstly, the Network Society is discussed from a theoretical perspective; and secondly, from the viewpoint of the locus of this research, the city. The chapter begins with the theory of the Network Society, discussing the bright and dark sides of technology. Subsequently, different aspects of Castell's theory are viewed, including the new economy and 'all things 2.0', democracy, citizenship and governance. Finally, the trajectory of ICT and urban policy in post-industrial cities is discussed.

2.1.1 The space of flows versus the space of places – a new social order

In defining and characterising the Network Society, Castells articulates what the network logic means for social order and the conception of place:

“A major hypothesis is put forward: dominant functions are organized in networks pertaining to space of flows that links them up around the world, while fragmenting subordinate functions, and people, in the multiple space of places, made of locales increasingly segregated and disconnected from each other.” (Castells, 1996, p. 476)

The terms “space of flows” and “space of places” have been widely adopted in social sciences, however, they should be unpacked for clarity. The space of flows is “a *new spatial logic*”, whereas the space of places refers to “*the historically rooted spatial organization of our common experience*”. The new logic, or the space of flows, is “*becoming the dominant spatial manifestation of power and function in our societies*” (*ibid*, p. 378).

Castells (1996) explains that “*space is the expression of society*” (p. 410). “Space”, from the point of view of social theory, “*is the material support of time-sharing social practices*” (*ibid*, p. 411). Traditionally, simultaneous social practices in a given space would be assimilated to contiguity. The space of flows, however, provides for material support of simultaneous practices “*that do not rely on physical contiguity, since this is precisely the case of the dominant social practices of the information age*” (*ibid*, p. 411). In this sense the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has been instrumental to the rise of the Network Society. ICTs are seen as a catalyst for a disassociation between spatial propinquity and “*the performance of everyday life’s functions: work, shopping, entertainment, healthcare, education, public services, governance...*” (Castells, 1996, p. 394)

2.1.2 The resulting condition - spatial transformation

In a condensed version of the Network Society, the dynamics between the economy and democracy is a double movement of erosion of the power vested in the nation state, a decline of representative democracy, and a concentration of power in border-penetrating networks of influence which control the (global) flows of capital - the space of flows. The relationships between the transterritorial networks and localities are differential, resulting in an unevenness which, according to Castells, suggests that the connection between the global and the local “*becomes the appropriate perspective for the new urban sociology*” (*ibid*, p. 697).

For many commentators the theory of the Network Society may not be as

dichotomising on global-local relations as suggested. For example, Stalder (2006, p. 166) argues,

“The key aspect of the space of flows is not its separation from the space of places, but its ability to fragment localities and reintegrate some of the components into new functional units on the basis of their connection to the space of flows”.

This refers to Castells’ logic on spatial transformation. This new spatial logic, *“expressed in ... a variable geography of hyperconnection and structurally induced “black holes” is one of the most substantial and original aspects of Castells”* (ibid, p. 166). In a highly schematised version, the Network Society proposes that the more connected a place is (to transportation and telecommunication networks), the higher its value in the global economy (or the space of flows). This results in spatial transformation in the electronically networked city.

2.2 Local government in the space of flows

The idea of the city in the Network Society is entwined with the world city hypothesis (Friedman, 1986; Sassen, 1994), linking urbanization processes to global economic forces. It is argued that a number of global cities occupy a commanding role in the world economy owing to the presence of global economic giants, such as multinational corporations and investment banks (e.g. Sassen, 1994). Local governance therefore has to negotiate or “manage” global and local networks: *“global city is a network of non-contiguous territories, reunited around the task of managing globalism”* (Castells, 2000, p. 697, citing Graham and Marvin, 2001).

Linked to the idea of spatial transformation is the ‘glocal’ state work by Brenner (1998). The glocal thesis argues that, rather than losing relevance, the state is re-scaling through a neoliberal governance strategy of industrial restructuring. The purpose of this is to enable new forms of capital mobility on the supra-national level and to promote the global competitiveness of major sub-national growth poles, sometimes called ‘technopoles’ (Pelkonen, 2004 p. 687). In his chapter in ‘Cybercities’ Castells (2004) argues that key metropolitan regions in the world are so-called ‘nodes’ where most knowledge accumulation in the Network Society takes place. Such urban nodes will benefit from more investment, better management and living conditions etc. Castells (2004) sees these nodes as critical to the success of the metropolitan economy that surround them. Under these conditions, urban policy-making is biased towards *“the adaptation of the space of places (of the*

metropolitan region) to the space of flows that conditions the economic competitiveness of the region” (ibid, p. 90).

The increasing internationalisation and privatisation associated with the space of flows is seen as a threat to (local) citizenship and democratic governance, a trend concurring with what critical geographers and others have termed ‘neoliberalism’ (see also 2.7). Local authorities’ governance strategies are part of this process, linked to the glocal thesis also where “international projection becomes a question of life or death” (Martins and Rodriguez-Alvarez, 2007, p. 391).

Harvey’s (1989) analysis, which predates the theory of the Network Society, suggests that entrepreneurial strategies resulting from inter-city competition often result in more volatility, less stability, greater unevenness and ephemerality of the benefits in the urban economy. Furthermore, these adverse effects can take a very geographical shape within the city expressed through patterns of localised social and economic problems.

Castells argues that local authorities have a key role in stemming the tide of globalisation and privatisation, however, *“the nostalgia of the public domain will not be able to countervail the structural trends towards diversity, specification, and individualization of life, work, space and communication, both face to face and electronic”* (2004, p. 86). He calls for a new theory of urbanism, one that takes into account the key elements of socio-spatial change which is characterised by this *“double movement of inclusion into transterritorial networks, and exclusion by the spatial separation of places”* (ibid, p. 84)

In order to form a more concrete idea of the role and function of the local authority in the theory of the Network Society, the following views are considered. Thrift (2002) posits that the space of flows is not abstract, that in fact it is a product of communication flows created by people bound to physical territories. Rutherford (2005) argues that in the networked age of so-called global cities, a local dimension of “territorial fixity” continues to play an important part in the economic and technological connectivities. Rutherford puts forward a three-tiered conception of the space of flows, consisting of:

- 1) technical layer (‘hard’ infrastructure, such as fibre-optic cabling)
- 2) networks of nodes and hubs (the transterritorial connections formed over the technical infrastructure layer)

- 3) place-based procedures and practices (social, cultural, political, economic, regulatory etc.) which are “*multifarious and sometimes highly conflicting and discordant*” (*ibid* p. 2403)

Rutherford argues that while the first two layers suggest supremacy of global networks, the third layer remains firmly rooted in local practices. Rutherford describes this as an underpinning of specific “local territorialities” as opposed to the homogenous “footloose flows and networks of the global economy” (*ibid*, p. 2403). The city contains an intertwined space of these three tiers of the space of flows in order to accumulate and retain wealth, and local government has a stake in all of them.

2.3 The Network Society from a critical perspective

The terms economy and society are grounded in social theory, much of which are references to Karl Marx’s thesis. It is useful to be aware of the Marxist interpretation insofar as it influences the theory of the Network Society. The Marxist stance is built on the assumption that society is shaped by an underlying economic base which determines all other social structures and phenomena.

Castells’ early career has been described as neo-Marxist and his analysis of urban issues as mainly concerned with structure and collective consumption, building on a heritage of Marxism. However, Stalder (2006) notes that the theory of the Network Society remains purposely coy about any direct Marxist references. It is not explicit in the ‘grand narrative’ of the Network Society what Castells’ intended stance is on Marxist determinacy on economy versus society, but it is implicit in the critique by Castells’ peers that there is a degree of departure at least from the Marxist stance. Indeed a later essay by Castells (2000) clarifies this position. Castells contends that “*we are living in a new society, of which the new economy is only one component*” (*ibid*, p. 693).

Marcuse (2002) illustrates how the embedded technological determinism in the theory of the Network Society depoliticises globalisation. More specifically, Marcuse argues that Castells distances himself from his earlier post-Marxist stance and that in the Network Society thesis human actors (or agency) are portrayed as powerless, or free from culpability for any of the structural inequalities in society: “*Power and conflicts of power disappear from view*” (p. 137). Smith (2002) posits that “*Castells is another urban theorist who has represented the local as [...]. under siege by global economic and technological restructuring*” (p. 111). Instead, the inanimate networks

themselves, as a conduit for the unstoppable global 'flows', determine socio-economic outcomes. The theory of the Network Society seems to be "*substituting form for content, a particular organisational form for a particular distribution of power*" (Smith, 2002 p. 136). Marcuse highlights that this depoliticised, agent-less theory excuses the outcomes of globalisation and has been used to give support to, "*current third way social democracy*" and "*global cities worship*" (2002, p. 136). Poignantly for the present study, it has widely been used to support the "*competitive city prescriptions that Borja and others (including sometimes Castells) are promoting around the world*" (*ibid*). The latter is a distinct feature of contemporary mainstreamed 'place-marketing' policy and practices by city administrations today (Graham, 2004).

Smith argues that a "*structuralist dialectic of domination and resistance*" follows from the theory of the Network Society where "*global domination produces local resistance*" (2002, p. 112). Here, the argument is that to view the local as an "*inherently defensive community formation*" is not helpful as any given locality is "*subject to diverse readings and given different symbolic significance by differently situated social groups and their corresponding discursive networks*" (*ibid*, p. 127). Moreover, this echoes the views of Graham and Healey (1999) who argue for a *multiplex* conception of 'place' in urban governance, discussed further in section 2.7.

In summary, despite its sprawling nature and internal contradictions documented in literature, the theory of the Network Society is widely referenced in literature, and it has been influential in policy also. It remains one of the most pertinent accounts to adopt as a theoretical framework for the present research about citizenship in the electronically networked city.

2.3.1 Technology and agency

An important ontological issue to clarify for this research is how technology is understood within society and the direction of causality between the two. The Network Society would not exist without modern ICTs, however, Castells posits that:

"I understand technology, following Claude Fischer (1992), as material culture – that is, as a socially embedded process, not as an exogenous factor affecting society... While new information technologies are not causal factors of (this) social change, they are indispensable means for the actual manifestation of many current processes of social change." (Castells, 2000, p. 693)

Indeed Bang and Esmark (2009, p. 10) state that while ICTs are a key driver in the emergence of the Network Society, “...*society shapes technology according to the needs, values, interests, and identities of people who make use of it*”.

In other words, technology facilitates social, economic and political change. However, technology is not the root cause of this change, nor is it an active *agent* of change, but it is viewed as being part a social structure. An important observation here is that spatial transformation is not a direct result of technology *per se*, rather, the social interactions that are facilitated via electronic networks make this transformation happen. The spatial transformations of Castells are in essence transformations of social practices and experiences. This broadly concurs with David Harvey’s (1989) conceptualisation which explores the mechanisms of inter-urban competition, urban change and economic development vis-à-vis governance and what he has termed “*city making*” (p. 3). According to Harvey, “*urbanisation should, rather, be regarded as a spatially grounded social process*” (p. 5), in response to a perceived separation in urban studies between (macro-) social change and (macro-) economic development from (local) spatial practices. Harvey also criticises the reification of cities as ‘active agents’ resulting in a confusion of the role of political-economic development and competing agendas which are, according to Harvey, driven by human actors and their interests.

As such, a case can be made for the adoption of a social constructionist epistemology for the present research. The social constructionist position emphasises the social context within which ideas are generated and exchanged between individuals and groups, ultimately contributing to knowledge which is “*intrinsically the common property of a group or else nothing at all*” (Kuhn, 1970, p. 210). Further discussion on the epistemology from the point of view of this research is provided in chapter 4. Next, the polarised discussion on the social impacts of ICTs is summarised.

2.4 Bridging or deepening digital (social and economic) divides?

The social impacts of technology and the internet in particular divide opinion¹ in terms of their potential benefits and drawbacks. These opinions can crudely be classified as “optimist” and “pessimist” (Norris, 2001), or “utopian” and “dystopian” (Katz and Rice, 2002). Both strands have proliferated alternative visions for the future, depending on the author’s view. These “*post-urban fantasies*” have economic and social permutations influenced by a technological determinism in what has been termed the “*utopianism of a neoliberal global economy*” and “*cyberlibertarianism [...] as an inherently democratic transformation*” (Graham, 2004 p. 7-8). The optimists contend that with the help of the internet, a more egalitarian society can be created, while the pessimists are certain that society will be atomised and that social isolation would follow (Katz and Rice, 2002). Furthermore, the pessimists predict that internet politics will disproportionately benefit the existing elites and is unlikely to reach out to the currently excluded and/or disengaged (Norris, 2001).

The internet offers an ideological battleground in respect of democracy, accountability, transparency, civil society and citizenship (Clift, 2002; Coleman, 2005a; Mossberger *et al*, 2008; Tsagarousianou *et al*, 1998). Whilst the old institutions of representative democracy are argued to suffer with the expansion of the internet, there is a rising trend of direct political engagement and participation by individuals, exemplified by citizen journalism, blogging and other forms of online campaigning (e.g. Coleman, 2005a, 2005b). A dualism colours the debate; the online environment is argued to be socially unifying as well as fragmenting, commercially egalitarian yet exploitative, politically empowering whilst also undemocratic, geographically it is supposed to have marked the death of distance as well as given rise to a new sharp focus on locality (e.g. Cairncross, 1997; Dahlberg, 2001; Faiock *et al*, 2008; Graham, 2002, 2004; Slack and Williams, 2000).

In spatial terms, Graham (2002, pp. 47-48) argues that the information age gives rise to an increasing geographical unevenness: “*we cannot doubt that dominant uses of ICTs currently support the deepening of geographical unevenness at all scales*”. However, Graham comments on the emerging progressive social potential brought about by technological change:

¹ In popular press it has been argued that ICTs, namely social networking sites, can cause damage to children’s brains, based on research by the acclaimed Baroness Greenfield (The Daily Mail, 2009a; The Guardian, 2009).

“...Beyond the dominant application of ICTs, many efforts are now emerging at the local, urban, regional, national and international scales, which seek to exploit their capabilities (...) which are more equitable, democratic and sustainable (...) As diffusion of ICTs widens, many more efforts to work ‘against the grain’ of commodification and polarisation are emerging: crucially, the ‘space of flows’ is starting to be tied to the ‘grassroots’. ” (ibid, pp. 47-48)

The sceptics are less impressed with what information technology has to offer by way of widening economic opportunity or political participation, arguing that it can distort businesses and increase central control exercised by corporations over employees and by governments over citizens (Carr, 2004 and 2008). Massey *et al* (1992) provide a critique of “high-tech fantasies” through the lens of science parks. The inherent linear assumptions between science, technological innovation, as well as the definitions of the skills and labour market characteristics of the archetypal science park model are conducive to social inequality (Massey *et al*, 1992, p. 244).

The idea of digital divides is largely attributed to social stratification (Norris, 2001) whereby the (information) “haves” and “have nots” enjoy differential opportunities in life because the internet is becoming increasingly central to people’s social life, work, education and play. The core of the argument between the optimists and the pessimists is whether the internet will help to bridge digital divides or deepen them. There is no conclusive answer to this polarised debate, as Katz and Rice (2002) posit, extreme opinions for and against the internet are probably exaggerated, and the truth lies somewhere in between.

The review of literature in the ensuing chapter forms a narrative which fluctuates between the economic and social underpinnings that are characteristic of the technology agenda pursued by governments in the advanced urban economies of the post-industrial world. The remainder of chapter 2 discusses in further detail the themes raised in the sections above. Specific attention is paid to the economy, democratic governance, citizenship, and lastly, urban policy.

2.5 The New Economy

“Except for a few stubborn academic economists, there is widespread consensus that we have entered a new economy” (Castells 2000, p. 693). The central tenets of post-industrialism, under which the ideas supporting the ‘new economy’ emerge, have been crystallized as follows:

- the source of productivity and growth lies in the generation of knowledge;
- economic activity would shift from goods production to services delivery;
- and
- the new economy would increase the importance of occupations with a high information and knowledge content. (Castells 1996, p. 203)

Another contemporary author, Leadbeater (1999) describes the new economy in his title *‘Living on thin air – the new economy’*:

“In old capitalism, the critical assets were raw materials, land, labour and machinery. In the new capitalism, the raw materials are know-how, creativity, ingenuity and imagination” (p. 1).

The new economy is sometimes used interchangeably with the term knowledge economy. It could be argued that the new economy is a more ideological term, symbolic of wider societal and cultural change as seen in Leadbeater’s quotation above, whereas the knowledge economy lends itself to a tighter definition. The knowledge economy is relevant for cities, as demonstrated by the Work Foundation whose *“Ideopolis”* (Nathan and Westwood, 2002) programme has been influential in the UK, particularly for Manchester. The Ideopolis programme was inspired by places such as Seattle, Boston and San Francisco in the United States, and Helsinki and Barcelona in Europe (Cannon *et al*, 2003), which were characterised with intellectual capital and business confidence required in a successful 21st century post-industrial city. One definition of the knowledge economy is put forward:

“The share of the national income and employment produced by innovating organisations combining ICT and highly skilled labour to exploit global scientific, technological and creative knowledge networks” (Brinkley, 2006 cited in Williams *et al*, 2006, p. 8)

The significance of ICT and globalisation as well as the ability to exploit knowledge for wealth creation are central to the new economy thesis. For the purposes of this research, this economic turn is discussed in light of the Network Society. Castells argues that *“capital is either global or becomes global to enter the accumulation process in the electronically networked economy”* (1996, p. 472-3). He posits that the

new economy has two “*fundamental distinctive features*”; it is both *informational* and *global* (*ibid*, p. 66). Castells maintains that the revolution in the diffusion of information technologies is the most distinctive feature between the economies of the first and the second half of the twentieth century.

Explaining the determinants of economic growth is an active field of research, with specific effort dedicated to explaining the role of technological development as a growth factor (Koutroumpis, 2009). Here, Solow’s classic research in the middle of the 20th century is often cited as a source to the wide-spread notion that technological change is the single most important factor of growth and labor productivity (Castells, 1996; Koutroumpis, 2009). The well-known “Solow’s paradox” dating back to 1987 postulated that one can detect the impact of computers everywhere except in the national productivity figures (OECD, 2001a), which causes debate still between economists (Draca *et al*, 2006; Davies, 2005). This debate is summarised in the section below.

2.5.1 The microchip and macroeconomics

To focus further on the so-called new economy and Castells’ claim that it is specifically the diffusion of modern ICTs that has helped to create a new economy, wider literature on this topic is briefly summarised here. The popular notion of the new economy has been inspired by the productivity growth in North America between the years 1992 and 2001 (Gordon, 2000; Hagemann, 2008). During these years, ICT became largely synonymous with competitiveness and growth, and this idea spread to Europe. The EU’s Lisbon strategy “a partnership for growth and jobs” launched in 2000, and the new “New Economic Strategy 2020” (EC, 2010a) picks out knowledge, innovation, education and digital society as essential features of Europe’s future economy (see 5.2). There appears to be a broad political consensus that technology will perpetually drive productivity. An ageing population in the West increases the pressure for increased labour force productivity, alongside global competition from regions of fast growth, such as China and India (Jorgensen and Klay, 2007).

Gordon (2000) has argued for a skeptical case towards what he perceives as the popular (or populist) notion of a fundamental transformation in the U.S. economy thanks to the microchip and the internet. He posits that whilst the technology-driven new economy has created a “*dynamic explosion of productivity growth in the durable manufacturing sector*” it has meant little to “*the 88% of the economy outside of durable manufacturing*” (p. 50). Jorgensen and Klay (2007) equally acknowledge the

difficulties in translating technology-enabled efficiencies (e.g. automation) to the service sector which still largely relies upon human productivity.

Gordon concludes that the new economy and the technological innovations around the internet do not equal the industrial revolution:

“The great inventions that constitute what has been called the Second Industrial Revolution [...] it represents a far smaller increment in the standard of living than achieved by the extension of day into night achieved by electric light, [...] the shrinking of the globe achieved by the airplane [...] and the enormous improvements in life expectancy, health and comfort achieved by urban sanitation and indoor plumbing” (2000, p. 72).

On the surface, it would seem that Gordon (2000) rebukes the central argument of the Network Society. However, it could be said that whilst Gordon concludes that the impacts of the internet and the microchip on the new economy have not been as fundamental as the enthusiasts claim, this argument based on productivity growth and macro-economics is not enough to rebuke the central tenets of the information technology revolution. It is, however, useful to bear in mind that the new economy could have less impact on productivity than perhaps suggested in popular media and political rhetoric. Nevertheless, macroeconomics has one blind spot in terms of the Network Society; it fails to capture the way in which businesses, organisations and individuals (re-)organise and behave in the new economy.

This emerging debate is to do with the growing many-to-many exchange of ideas, not solely for commercial purposes (e.g. Shirky, 2008). The next section attempts to summarise 'all things 2.0' from the perspective of the economy as well as the argued 'democratising' characteristics of ICTs.

2.5.2 All things 2.0

This section brings together discussion on the burgeoning Web 2.0 phenomenon which the OECD characterises as 'participatory web' (OECD, 2007). Web 2.0 is not a new version of the internet, it uses existing networked technology in a way which allows users to be more active and contribute or create and share content online. O'Reilly has been cited as having coined the term 'Web 2.0'; he understands Web 2.0 as a platform for applications which harness network effects due to many people using and sharing them, or what O'Reilly (2006) calls "harnessing collective intelligence".² This trend could be argued to have been predicted by Castells (1996);

² Also known as "crowd sourcing". Crowd sourcing refers to the process of opening up a process, seeking contributions from the public to come up with a solution to a specific

he described how “users become doers” as technology becomes more pervasive and ubiquitous.

Whilst scepticism remains within the macro-economic discipline about the impact of the information technology revolution, on micro scale the disruptive (Christensen, 1997) nature of technology is arguably more widely acknowledged. The “disruptive technology” term was coined by Christensen in his 1997 title *‘The Innovator’s Dilemma’* (Danneels, 2004). Christensen argues that the internet is disruptive to some but sustaining to other firms, depending on whether it is consistent with their business model. For instance, the internet is sustaining to catalogue retailers and discount brokers, but it is disruptive to department stores and full-service brokers (e.g. Christensen and Raynor, 2003). Specific examples of innovations based on internet technology such as peer-to-peer file sharing³ (of copyrighted material) have unarguably been disrupting to the industries that live off copyrights. The bestseller *“Wikinomics”* by Tapscott and Williams (2006) argues that there has been a transformation in the way businesses operate specifically using the internet, moving towards crowd sourcing or collective ways of (information) production.

Many-to-many, by contrast, is a social model of communication, rather than a technical application, based on file-sharing or peer-to-peer networks. In the field of economy, the many-to-many trend has been described by Anderson (2006) as “the long tail” (of the economy). Anderson argues that the internet has turned the old economic model, based on big businesses commanding large market shares, on its head. Here, the argument is made that the internet has allowed a proliferation of many-to-many (or few-to-few in the case of small niche products) business models where the bulk of transactions in the economy could in fact be played out on a small scale. In political terms, this was witnessed in Barack Obama’s 2008 presidential election campaign funding, where very small contributions from great numbers of individuals (“the long tail”), rather than lofty contributions from business elites, formed the bulk of the funding (Leadbeater, 2008).

Anderson’s (2009) subsequent title *‘Free: The Future of a Radical Price’* describes the abundance of content and services available on the internet without a charge to

question, or defining the question in the first place.

³ “Peer-to-peer” is based on the ability of networked technologies to allow a person to share for example content or network bandwidth within a network of participants. In the UK, the Digital Economy Bill which received Royal Assent in April 2010 introduced strong measures against copyright infringement. The Bill was criticised for its draconian measures against peer-to-peer on the one hand, and failing to make provision for a universal service commitment to a digital infrastructure on the other (The Guardian, 2010; The BBC, 2010a).

the majority of customers. Businesses give certain (level of) services or goods for free, relying on a small number of paying customers for higher end or full use of services, or else on cross-subsidy in the form of advertising revenue. Skype, the internet telephony service, is an example of this, where the vast majority of users access the free service, and a small number of customers pay for a premium service.

Equally, returns or benefits can be quantified by contributors in non-monetary ways. In the 'old economy' incentives were quantified in monetary terms, whereas in the new economy, attention and reputation serve as incentives. According to Anderson, every abundance creates new scarcity; with the cost of technology and (digital) distribution being close to nil (abundance), in the "attention economy" audiences and reputation become the new scarcity which can be turned into revenue (e.g. as with Google ads). Anderson (2009) and Leadbeater (2008) illustrate how in the "gift economy" participants act genuinely without any monetary benefit (such as Freecycle, Wikipedia and Graigslist). In the "gift economy" many are merely seeking an audience for what they want to share, without financial gain. This trend was pioneered in the technical open source community, often attributed to the Finn Linus Torvalds, who developed Linux, an alternative operating system to Windows, by releasing his code for anyone's use and improvement.

Whilst the open source community was born out of IT programming and still revolves around a community of experts, the internet now allows for people from a non-technical background to collaborate in various ways. This emanates from the democratization of technology, meaning that once the cost of a certain technology decreases (which it has done radically in the case of the microprocessor, digital storage, or bandwidth) and it becomes simple to use, a growing number of individuals ultimately use that technology in new, unpredictable ways to serve their own needs, not according to the intentions of those who designed the technology, or other 'experts' (Anderson, 2009).

For the citizen-consumer, Web 2.0 offers new opportunities. The bottom-up aggregation of the "wisdom of crowds" described above relies on two levels of users, described in the example below as "professional amateurs" and "ordinary" people:

"Consumer 2.0 relies on two kinds of expertise. Firstly, there are the professional amateurs, who provide the depth of knowledge. Secondly, masses of "ordinary" consumers provide the breadth of knowledge by having their input aggregated. The interplay between these two kinds of expertise is fundamental for the success of Consumer 2.0." (Repo et al, 2006, p. 3)

Leadbeater (2008) in 'We-think' addresses the collaborative and creative powers of

the internet and crowd sourcing. Leadbeater's account is at heart a contribution to the literature celebrating the collectively democratizing and individually empowering qualities of the internet. Leadbeater discusses "*the web's extreme openness, its capacity to allow anyone to connect to virtually anyone else*" and the potential and the risks inherent in this networked world (2008, p. 3). The web also has the potential to "*amplify errors and prejudices*" (*ibid*, p. 4), eroding professionalism and specialism – a trend which could lead to unforeseen outcomes, both welcome and unwelcome.

2.5.3 Government 2.0

What stands out from Leadbeater's analysis is that the nature of the internet is open, ambiguous and uncertain. He discusses the sharing culture from the point of view of civil society, or what he terms social creativity in politics and democracy. He argues that "*a public sector that does not create platforms for its citizens to create solutions for themselves, together, will soon start to seem old, outdated and tired*" (*ibid*, p. 153).

There is growing pressure on governments to embrace new technology for a multitude of reasons; the Labour government's modernisation programme since 1997 placed much emphasis on new technology, discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.4. However, there is no clear or coherent strategy yet for the use of Web 2.0 in government. Instead, a raft of initiatives emerged incrementally, seeking to experiment with crowd sourcing in public policy. Recent examples of this are two centrally run campaigns under Labour administration: '*Show us a better way*' (Cabinet Office, 2008) and '*Building Democracy*' (The Ministry of Justice, 2008). The election of May 2010 triggered a change in government. The new coalition government's approach to crowd sourcing included the high profile Spending Challenge website, where suggestions were sought about where and how public spending should be cut (Cameron and Clegg, 2010).

In summary, changes are afoot impacting unevenly and unpredictably on individuals and organisations, captured by popular terms such as 'long tail', 'attention economy', 'peer-to-peer' or 'crowd sourcing' referring to *all things 2.0* as suggested in the title of this section. There is a lack of theorising about this latest wave of technologically-aided social change. A discussion on the impact of what is often termed "new media" or "social media" is emerging in political science and sociology, but these contributions have been described as only just beginning to consider the 'in flux' impact of Web 2.0 on the relations between the state and citizens (Chadwick

2006, 2009; Chadwick and Howard, 2008).

In order to underpin the present empirical research, it is deemed more appropriate to incorporate an established theoretical framework in the scholarly field of technology implementation in local government. Arguably, while the frontiers of new technology change rapidly, public administration is a relatively static establishment and the socio-technical issues embedded in the modernisation efforts have changed remarkably little in the past 20 years. Such theory on technology implementation in local government is presented in chapter 3.2.

The underlying promise of networked technology is a more democratic public sphere where contributions to public debates can be made by anyone, not only those with elite access to traditional mass media or 'official' government channels (e.g. Barber, 1984, 2003). A network society has the potential to be a more democratic society, but how this potential has been realised is one of the core questions in this research. The next section explores democracy, citizenship and governance in more detail.

2.6 A democratic network society

By way of introduction, the interplay between the Network Society and democracy is most often depicted as the crisis of the nation-state, which according to Castells, is being eroded from two sides: the loss of sovereignty vested in the nation state and the loss of legitimacy of the institutions of liberal representative democracy through a lack of engagement of the electorate (Stalder, 2006). The power of the nation-state is seeping in two directions: upwards towards multi-national coalitions of nations, as well as towards sub-national forms of governance, such as city-regions. Castells highlights the European Union as a significant example of this sharing or delegating of sovereignty in a network of nation-states (Castells, 1996, p. 15). As a consequence, the state has to "*engage in a process of global governance without a global government*" (Bang and Esmark, 2008, p. 9).

From the citizenship perspective, the Network Society has the potential to foster fragmentation and individualization in the social systems of cities; "*because cities are large aggregates of individuals, forced to coexist, and communes are located in the metropolitan space*" (Castells, 2004, p. 85). The emergence of cliquy communities (either geographically dispersed communities of interest or location-based) with protectionist views, and the blurring of the conception of local participation and identity expressed through consumerism are seen to add confusion about the shared public sphere which is at the heart of civil society: "*The spread of horizontal*

communication via the internet accelerates the process of fragmentation and individualization of symbolic interaction” (Castells, 2004, p. 86).

In short, despite the promise of a more democratic public sphere, the Network Society thesis poses multiple challenges to communitarian ideas. To inform the conceptual framework of this research, the next section explores democratic theory more closely.

2.6.1 Models of democracy and the democratic deficit

This section summarises the main strands of democratic theory after David Held (1996); republican and liberal models of democracy are the two classic variants juxtaposed. The underpinning philosophy of a republican democracy is the realisation of sovereignty and liberty through participation, thus creating the ideal for the republican ‘active citizenship’. Liberal democracy on the other hand, famously conceptualised by the English philosopher John Stuart Mill, is built on the concept of individual liberty and a ‘neutral state’. The principal objective of the state is to secure individual liberties which can be achieved through representative government, competitive market economy, participation in political life and minimal state interference. Out of liberalism was born neoliberalism and the ‘minimal state’ which primarily sees citizens as consumers. A definition of neoliberalism is offered in section 2.7 on governance.

The third modern variant of democracy is the Marxist conception of ‘direct democracy’ that addresses the central critique of liberalism – its reliance on free market economy and accumulation of private capital. Karl Marx believed that democracy could not be achieved whilst production was controlled according to capitalist principles. Democratization of society could be achieved by abolishing the class system and integrating the state with society which is governed by people collectively (Held, 1996).

Whilst the liberal model complete with free market economy has been widely accepted as the dominant model, certainly among Western democracies but increasingly elsewhere, too, it is not without its critics. The notion of democracy remains far from being ‘resolved’ and contemporary liberal representative democracy as a source of legitimation for government action remains under scrutiny and calls for greater citizen participation are made to address the democratic deficit which Healey (1999) describes as the distance between the state and the civil society.

The democratic deficit is linked to the idea of elitist democracy whereby a minority of active and well-informed citizens, or 'political elites', are the source legitimacy despite the inactivity of an 'ill-informed' majority (Kavanaugh *et al*, 2005). However, competitive elitism fails to consider the ill effects of non-participation and consequently the concentration of power in the hands of the few who control the bulk of economic and political resources (*ibid*).

Among prominent critics, Barber (1984, 2003) argues that neoliberal policies and the hegemony of the global market economy are conducive to a democratic deficit at the heart of the representative system. Influential modern variants, such as 'deliberative democracy' (Habermas, 1984, 1998) focus on the legitimacy crisis and the problems of elitism in the liberal representative model, and argue for greater citizen participation in public life.

Both Habermas and Barber have inspired a following in the 'internet democracy' debate, largely referred to as 'e-democracy' (e.g. Coleman and Norris, 2005; Kavanaugh *et al*, 2005). Tsagarousianou *et al* (1998) argue in '*Cyberdemocracy*' that ICT is central to enhancing contemporary democratic political processes and instrumental to the creation of new opportunities for citizen engagement. Jaeger (2005) also refers to the growing number of scholars who argue for the potential of e-government as an avenue to enhance the democratic process, both from the perspective of improving the quality of public participation and also increasing public confidence in government.

2.6.2 Citizenship

The citizenship discussion can be related back to the two basic models of democracy introduced at the start of the previous section. The two conceptions are described as *liberal* citizenship driven by self-interest in a market-led (capitalist) society, as opposed to *republican* citizenship that is characterised by participation in communal affairs and in self-governance in a social democratic society, often referred to as the communitarian model (Aberbach and Christensen, 2005; Fischer, 1999; Held, 1996).

The question of citizenship is central to the current perceived legitimacy crisis of representative democracy. Coleman and Gotze (2001, p. 4) posit:

"As citizens have become less deferential and dependent, and more consumerist and volatile, old styles of representation have come under pressure to change. There is a pervasive contemporary estrangement

between representatives and those they represent, manifested in almost every western country by falling voter turnout; lower levels of public participation in civic life; public cynicism towards political institutions and parties; and a collapse in once-strong political loyalties and attachments."

The estrangement and distance between citizens and state institutions are problematic given the powers that are vested within the state. Trust is arguably at the heart of the citizen-state relationship and in a representative liberal democracy a level of trust is necessary.

The internet is thought to increase government transparency and therefore restore public trust and the legitimacy of government action (e.g. Ellis, 1999; Jaeger, 2005). The basic assumption is that ICTs can facilitate wider inclusion of citizens to be politically as well as economically active members of society (e.g. Hague and Loader, 1999; Mossberger *et al*, 2008). However, the consequences could be contradicting or counter-intuitive on state-citizen relations. Some have raised concerns that the ideas for 'direct democracy' often echoed by proponents of e-democracy erode the foundations of representative democracy whose institutions remain the cornerstone of legitimacy of state action (Kellner, 2009). Authors such as Coleman and Gotze (2001) make the case that the internet should not be viewed as a threat to the representative model. Rather, representative democracy can be complemented through modern ICTs, particularly through more immediate connections between the government and citizens.

The dichotomy between the active citizen and the consumer-citizen has a distinct dimension in the field of e-government. The dilemma around the promise and problems of ICTs revolve around the expectations brought about by modern technology for speedy, instant responses the consumer-citizen would expect based on experiences of 'e-commerce', for example. This is in conflict with a more participatory/deliberative process of engagement that is "*complex, costly and time-consuming*" (Andrews and Turner, 2006, p. 388; also Fagan *et al*, 2006). This has been described as the "goldilocks dilemma" by the Kellner (2007) around the 'fluidity' of expectations for internet democracy versus the 'stickiness' of representative democratic processes

A corpus of literature exists on the potential problems resulting from emerging technologies and their implications for democracy. Wilhelm (2000) in his book on democracy in the digital age criticises contemporary political theorists' view of the internet technology as "*automatically supportive of a more robust public sphere*" (Wilhelm, 2000, p. 3). Wilhelm argues that ICTs can have a debilitating impact on

political discourse in the public sphere. He warns that computer networks could profoundly disrupt political life:

“The relation between deliberation and decision-making is unhinged and the very concept of the political is appropriated and put to work to service media conglomerates and accumulated economic interest rather than the interest of citizens” (p. 3)

In a similar vein, Buchstein (1997) offers a critical account on how internet technologies might distort citizenship mainly due to the commercialization of the internet. Previous research has outlined limitations to the development of deliberative online public fora which tend to be marginalised by commercialised and privatised forms of participation (Dahlberg, 2001). More recently, Carr (2008) has offered a critical account of a Google-powered society, subject to the interests of multinational business.

Moving onto citizen engagement, research has shown that effective, participatory on-line citizen engagement is time, resource and labour intensive and generally very rare (Fagan *et al*, 2006; Needham, 2004). Indeed the whole citizen engagement agenda is not without its critics. There are those who argue that the general public is not interested in participating in civic life and that the small minority who do take part are not representative of the wider population (Rogers, 2006). Such concerns are particularly relevant to the e-government agenda where the profile of users of e-services is reportedly biased towards the well-educated, wealthy and white in comparison with the wider internet user profile (Ho, 2002; Tolbert and Mossberger, 2006; Thomas and Streib, 2005).

Indeed the view that liberal representative democracy functions on the basis of a ‘political elite’ (Kavanaugh *et al*, 2005) which includes, apart from politicians, a small number of politically active citizens could easily be re-enforced through e-democracy due to patterns of digital exclusion.

There remains a very tangible set of socio-economic, cultural and procedural challenges to e-democracy, rooted in a question of resources, time and capacity of public administrations to engage a wider voice than that of elites. Thus an important conceptual link exists between the debates on democratic rejuvenation and the efficiency drive - two major themes of the Local Government Modernisation Agenda (see 3.4) which are addressed through ‘e-government’. In other words, these themes could be described as the economic and social aspects of the Network Society at the local level, also detectable in the dichotomy of the consumer-citizen concept.

2.7 Governance

In the preceding section theories of democracy and citizenship were discussed. This section offers different perspectives on governance drawing on a variety sources, including geography, planning, public administration and political science. These include “governance beyond the state” (Swyngedow, 2005), urban governance (Cochrane, 2007), public value management in networked governance (Brannan *et al*, 2006), socially constructed place-focused discourses (Healey, 1999), and governance as political communication in the Network Society (Bang and Esmark, 2008 and 2009). Secondly, this section offers a critical perspective on the popular notion of cities and governance practices being powerless or reactive in the face of the globalisation and the ‘space of flows’.

One of the central tenets of the Network Society is the diminishing power of the nation state. The powers are delegated ‘outside’ the formal structures of the state institution through governance arrangements involving both supra- and sub-national arrangements with actors who have limited degrees of accountability through democratic means. To be specific, outside the state can involve any scale, for example an Urban Regeneration Company operating in one part of a city or the G8 summit.

The widely observed shift from government to governance is explained as something symptomatic of the new, networked ways of organising and delivering state functions increasingly through partnerships:

“Government, in the language of debates across the world, has given way to governance in which state, private and non-governmental organisations and citizens themselves as individual actors from partnerships to attack problems in new ways” (Brannan et al, 2006, p. 994).

These “networks” and “partnerships” give cause for concern particularly with a view to democratic accountability. As Swyngedow (2005) posits:

“The shift from government to governance is associated with the consolidation of new technologies of government on the one hand, and with profound restructuring of the parameters of political democracy on the other, leading to a substantial democratic deficit.” (p. 1991).

Swyngedow argues that governing outside and beyond the state gives unprecedented scope for private economic actors as well as parts of the civil society by way of self-managing what was previously provided or organised by the state sector (national and local) (*ibid*).

Thus this process of governance engages to an increasing extent the private and third sectors to discharge functions the powers for which are vested within the state. It is useful to ask why this trend is occurring. Bang and Esmark (2008) offer an explanation which draws upon citizenship, trust and accountability all of which are central components of representative democracy:

“Governments and citizens are less confident about the merits of the public domain and the effectiveness of public action. Governments increasingly abdicate initiative to the private sector, and citizens turn themselves into consumers who assess government by its ability to deliver the desired goods to them effectively and on time, more than by its moral worth and trustworthiness” (p. 5).

Therefore, we might assume that governance outside the state seeks to be more ‘effective’ and ‘efficient’ than traditional forms of democratic governance. Cochrane (2007) argues that the new forms of governance designed to deliver economic competitiveness, or efficiency and choice in the language of public service provision, as the sole basis for collective social welfare exacerbate spatial inequality and unevenness. According to Cochrane and Etherington (2007), this is at the heart of neoliberalism:

“The reinterpretation of social policy in economic terms (i.e. neoliberalism) has found an expression in the emergence of forms of governance and management beyond the nation-state, and specifically within regional and urban spaces” (p. 2959).

Further to partnerships, governance in the Network Society has been appraised by Bang and Esmark (2008, 2009) who contend that the Network Society sets in motion transformative trends in governance towards:

“...interactive, reflexive and communicative forms of political regime-society relationships or even partnerships in which non-state actors from the private and the third sector play new strategic roles as ‘stakeholders’ and partners in policy management and implementation” (2008, p. 4).

The new partnering ethos in governance is prompted by the new networked economy. The characteristics of this economy are covered in section 2.5, but it is useful to re-iterate here that core economic activities in the Network Society are seen as global. Competitiveness and productivity are largely dependent on knowledge generation and most of all the connectedness of a place. Partnerships, in turn, facilitate connectedness. Moreover, the Network Society is characterized by complex inter-dependencies and governance networks where trust is required for these governance mechanisms to function effectively (Edelenbos and Klijn, 2007). Fukuyama (1995) has described trust as the cement of society which also reduces transaction costs and contributes not only to healthier democracies but also healthier

economies.

Healey's (1999) work combines elements of place-making and urban governance in the Information Society. Healey argues for communicative approaches in urban (networked) governance, building on Habermas' communicative action. The Habermasian approach to collective learning through communicative rationality, or public conversation and the normative assumptions embedded therein have been subject to wide-spread critique. Fundamentally, the assumption that everyone in society knows how to or is able to articulate their opinions is too optimistic. Additionally, individuals' willingness to take part in public debates is another well-documented problem (Rienstra and Hook, 2006).

Despite the sometimes utopian label given to communicative rationality (Habermas, 1998), examples of empirical evidence can be found where communicative action in a public policy context seems to have been successful (Habermas, 2006). Policy problems have been debated and discussed between ordinary citizens and public authorities, different viewpoints presented as well as conflicting evidence. Such practices have been proven to help citizens form more balanced and thoughtful opinions on complex public policy issues, such as in the case on electoral reform in British Columbia (Fishkin and Luskin, 2005).

Perhaps the most pertinent critique on communicative action comes from those who challenge the notion that citizens are able to or interested in taking part in discussions about public policy. Rienstra and Hook (2006) argue that the level of competency required of ordinary citizens to take part in communicative action is too high and thus sections of civil society become excluded from these debates (see also Huspek, 2007). However, their critique also offers a solution by arguing that successful deliberation requires 'heroic agents', highlighting the key role that facilitators play in ensuring social inclusion in policy debates. It is here that the lucrative promise of ICTs as an inclusive and accessible forum for deliberation has been promoted by the likes of Barber and Habermas.

Reflecting this back to Healey's (1999) work on building place-focused discourses in governance practices would seem to suggest that the active inclusion of marginalised citizens is required in order to "*confront contemporary economic, social and environmental challenges and their potential to reduce the democratic deficit, the distance between state and civil society.*" (*ibid*, p. 118) However, the reliance on the conception of place is not straight forward. Place has been described as being increasingly "multiplex" (Graham and Healey, 1999). Healey elaborates that "any

geographical area may be the locus of multiple place identities, developed in the different webs of relationships which transect a place" (1999, p. 118). The notion of multiplex cities goes beyond multiculturalism and identities, it refers to the "*socially constructed time-space experiences within urban life*" (Graham and Healey, 1999, p. 629)

This gives rise to the increasing "*splintering and fragmenting reality of urban space*" (*ibid*, 629) where technology and networks serve to empower, speed up or mobilise some individuals, whilst simultaneously the same forces work to disempower, hinder and spatially confine the lives of others. It is important therefore not to lose sight of how power is exercised and distributed when new technologies are introduced into governance practices. The next section summarises the governance discussion and draws upon the critique of the Network Society to highlight the issue of power.

2.7.1 Power in the Network Society

Before moving on to discuss the city and urban policy in the Network Society, this section recaps the main critique of Castells' theory introduced in the first part of chapter 2. Marcuse (2002) argued that: "*Power and conflicts of power disappear from view*" in the theory of the Network Society (p. 137). Bang and Esmark (2008) also raise the issue of 'invisible power', arguing that the concept of power is absent from the "*mapping of technology, capital and sociality [...] This is exactly what makes Castells susceptible to notions of states as the victims of network society*" (pp. 14-15). Bang and Esmark (2008) posit that governments are not victims, they are rather active agents articulating strategies in the Network Society. What they propose is that the shift from "*conventional democratic polity to the stakeholder and partnership programmes*" (*ibid*) is not a reactive response, rather a planned/strategic approach, to combat issues of public concern including globalisation, economic restructuring, technological innovation, complexity and the 'wicked issues' of contemporary society.

This shift is uncertain in nature. It could result in a more reflexive, active citizenry or indeed give a platform to private, neoliberal interests at any given scale. Its' ambiguous nature does not offer much by way of safeguards, but it could offer a creative space for accommodating a more inclusive approach to governance:

"Good governance based on networks as ethos and organisation embodies a form of power that is both intrusive and efficient, it may in fact also deliver what it claims to deliver in its more overtly normative incarnations: more freedom, more efficacy 'from below', political participation and reflexive citizens" (Bang and Esmark, 2009, p. 9)

However, this type of network governance also “*displays clear tensions with the normative program of democracy, because concerns for good governance may, at times, take priority over and set aside democratic institutions and procedures*” (ibid, pp. 8-9).

From a democratic perspective, the Network Society seems to give rise to increasing consumerism and individualisation which is reflected in the relationship between the state and the citizen. Democratic accountability is increasingly traded for consumer confidence. However, these are conscious choices and strategies by those in power, not unavoidable consequences of global forces. The next section 2.8 examines urban governance and policy decisions vis-à-vis ICTs in the information age city.

2.8 The information age city

The central tenets of the interplay between ICTs and urban policy are discussed in this section. As a preamble it could be said that the tensions tend to focus on the keenness of policy makers to embrace the knowledge economy/ competitiveness thesis, whilst prominent academics are skeptical particularly from a social justice perspective.

An oft-quoted author in this field is Florida (2002, 2005) whose ‘*The Rise of the Creative Class*’ makes the argument that localities, in order to maintain a competitive edge, must attract and retain a creative class of young, “geographically mobile” professionals (Feiock *et al*, 2008). Florida (2005) postulates that the “three T’s of Technology, Talent and Tolerance” make a successful, competitive place in the global knowledge economy.

Critics of urban policy in the UK have repeatedly made the argument that focusing on competitiveness through high-skilled jobs and the ‘knowledge economy’ do not resolve, in fact it could exacerbate, spatial inequality experienced acutely in contemporary cities (e.g. Cochrane, 2007). Van Winden *et al* (2007) warn against knowledge economies creating ‘dual economies’ where large parts of the population do not have the skills to benefit from it. Moreover, this global cities ‘worship’ (Mosco, 2004) has led to information age cities seeking to lure in multinational companies with ‘high-tech’ place-marketing strategies which Graham (2004, p. 199) describes as “*technological and economic spin*”.

2.8.1 Scales of the knowledge-driven economy: the rise of regions and city-regions

According to Castells, the structure of the global economy is determined by the competition between economic agents and between the locales, for example; countries, regions or other economic areas (1996, p. 103). The city as a political-economic area has been cast as a 'growth machine' since the 1970s (Molotoch, 1976). In the UK, regions and city-regions in particular are gaining momentum as competitive economic units since the sub-national review of economic development and regeneration in 2007 (HM Treasury/BERR/CLG, 2007). The rationale for the nascent city-regions in England is being based mainly on urban competitiveness (Parkinson, 2005). This spatial approach to economic policy making has been fuelled by the so-called 'New Economic Geography' whereby economists have begun to encroach on terrain traditionally occupied by geographers in order to understand the real time and space patterns of how the economy evolves (Boschma and Martin, 2007).

Europe has also encouraged networks of cities and policies directly aimed at supporting cities to improve the competitiveness of Europe (as well as national economies) (Deas and Ward, 2000). Perhaps reflecting the decline of the nation state, agglomeration theory⁴ gives justification for the enthusiasm at the sub-regional scale. In the national context, city-regions are seen as the engines of the new economy, with their agglomeration forces attracting economic growth (Parkinson, 2005). In England, the Local Government White Paper (DCLG, 2006a) has been said to accept "*the search for urban competitiveness as the new 'holy grail' of city development*" (Atkinson, 2007, pp. 66-67). Atkinson highlights that the economic focus of city-regional governance presents specific problems for democratic accountability.

2.8.2 Inter-urban competition

There is a wide consensus across various political and administrative cultures about the preference towards market rationality and privatisation in local strategies for inter-urban competition (Harvey, 1989). The tide turned against the previously welfare-focused progressive policies of the pre-Thatcherite era, influenced by the late 1960's Marxist movements, around the same time as the conservative government took office in 1979 (Marcuse, 2002).

⁴ Relates to the benefits arising from clusters of economic activity in a large urban area, related to economies of scale and network effects.

Notions of local government as a Fordist welfare services provider gave room to entrepreneurial strategies, charismatic leadership and place marketing, as in the case of Manchester's successive Olympic bidding and related developments in urban strategy (Cochrane *et al*, 1996). Lever (1999) posits that hallmark events and major pieces of infrastructure are often the most visible, but least significant objective of competitive cities.

In the UK, competitive cities have been identified as one of the three major national urban policy work streams in Hildreth's (2007) account on the place-shaping role of local authorities, the other two being neighbourhood renewal and urban renaissance. Hildreth highlights that the vision manifested in the Urban Task Force (1999) and the subsequent Urban White Paper (ODPM, 2000) is key to urban policy generally shifting from primarily being occupied with problems of market failure and deprivation to a new focus on the *potential* of cities.

This potential is often expressed in policy rhetoric surrounding the knowledge economy. The emergent 'creative/digital industries' and 'innovation' are increasingly in the forefront of strategies, such as the UK Digital Strategy (BIS/DCMS, 2009). The ability to innovate in the global market economy is seen to be largely dependent upon innovation rich knowledge-based industries (Huggings and Izushi, 2008). This approach has been adopted at sub-national, urban scales 'indiscriminately' (Lever, 1999). Neighbouring, sometimes overlapping urban economies are pursuing these aims independently in their increasingly competitive approach. Thus cities or city-regions seek to perform on a different trajectory from national economies, or outperform their national, regional or global competitors (Lever, 1999). Van Winden *et al* (2007) conclude that the knowledge economy is likely to lead to regional disparities as localities have unequal resources to attract growth.

Finally, a critical view is offered on the burgeoning regional knowledge economy thesis from within the regional science discipline. Phelps (2009) has analysed the failings of UK regional policy to reinvigorate older industrial regions, and makes the case that policies have been adopted without sufficient evidence of any material benefits to the locality:

"Depictions of regional economies as "knowledge" economies popular with policy makers have been adopted uncritically in theoretical interpretations of regional development. The rise of these seemingly insubstantial theoretical and policy tools has occurred at a time when the scope for steering 'mobile' private sector investment and the scale of positive impacts of that investment have decreased." (p. 585)

Phelps posits that the geographical basis of the so-called knowledge economy continues to be underspecified and that indeed “*there remains considerable scope (...) to better specify the geographical foundations economic growth and development, as a prelude to policy formulation*” (*ibid*, p. 590). This is a useful critique to bear in mind when considering competitive broadband strategies in the next section.

2.8.3 Connectivity as urban strategy

A broadband infrastructure is a key element of the information age city, from both economic and social policy perspectives (Preston and Cawley, 2008). Apart from the intangible side of the knowledge economy, focused on highly skilled jobs, culture/creative industry, digital content, quality of life and other “soft” factors influenced by Florida (2005), a hard layer sits underneath all this activity: the infrastructure that carries the bits which are basic building blocks of the knowledge being accumulated (see also Rutherford, 2005 in 2.2).

Graham and Marvin (2001) explain that digital infrastructure has become a competitive strategy for cities in the global economy. At the national as well as city-regional level, decision-makers are increasingly concerned about the provision of high-speed data infrastructure as a source of competitiveness to meet the growing demands of both businesses and domestic users. This is congruous with Florida’s (2005) arguments about creating a “business friendly” and “people friendly” locale.

International comparative indices, such as the World Knowledge Competitiveness Index (Huggins and Izushi, 2008) seem to fuel place-marketing policies. Indeed the Cushman and Wakefield report (2007, p. 4) states that “*The quality of telecommunications sees its importance increase ahead of national and international transport links*” when it comes to relocation decisions by major businesses. This appears to be one of the main reasons why many European cities, such as Amsterdam (Doeleman, 2007) and Manchester, are adopting interventionist policies to improve connectivity and data infrastructure (see chapter 6 for Manchester’s Corridor project).

There seems to be a race among cities internationally to offer so-called next generation access, referring to high-speed broadband via fibre-optic cabling. In the absence of a universal service obligation⁵, the competitive playing field is left wide

⁵ The former competitiveness minister Stephen Timms called a meeting in November 2007 with telecommunication executives and Ofcom, the UK regulator, to plan how next

open for cities to compete against each other in broadband offer.

The fear of 'being left behind' is fear of lesser economic growth than in areas with better connectivity that would appear to be attracting businesses, investors as well as skilled workers. The hypothesis of a link between fast broadband and economic growth has been endorsed by a number of politicians and lobbyists such as the UK-based Broadband Stakeholder Group (BSG, 2007), although a degree of scepticism has dominated the debate due to a lack of robust evidence (van Winden and Woets, 2004). However, a recent econometric study by Koutroumpis (2009) argues that a positive correlation between broadband penetration and economic growth exists.

However, the direction of causality between high-speed broadband and growth should not be taken for granted. Some argue that the causality could be the other way around; countries/regions where good governance and advanced economies exist tend to adopt ICTs faster and with better results than those regions with widespread poverty and inequality (von Haldenwang, 2004). De Castro and Jensen-Butler (2001, cited in Southern, 2002) arrive at a similar conclusion; that more productive regions can better exploit ICTs, therefore ICTs could increase regional disparities rather than reduce them.

In summary, there is a wide political consensus that fast broadband and economic growth are correlated. This has given rise to ICTs in economic and social regeneration, discussed further in the next section.

2.8.4 ICTs weave inequality into the urban fabric

Although ICTs are often portrayed as a progressive force in networked cities, Mosco (2004) posits that there is ample evidence to show that in such "technopoles" the control of space becomes privatised and internationalised. This, in turn, has implications for the (democratic) governance of places and (local) citizenship. "*The architecture of connectivity*" exacerbates inequalities, because certain nodes become more important than others, as well as re-enforcing existing power relations. Mosco makes the argument that electronic connectivity "*justifies transformations in*

generation access could be rolled out in Britain to avoid being "*left behind as other countries such as France, Germany, the US, Japan and South Korea built home broadband networks faster than anything available in Britain*" (The Guardian, 2007b). However, Labour's flagship policy on the 50p tax on fixed telephone lines to fund a universal next generation infrastructure, included in the Digital Britain White Paper (BIS/DCMS, 2009), was abandoned before the Digital Economy Bill was 'rushed through' Parliament before the general election in May 2010 (The BBC, 2010a).

governance that accelerate the privatization of public services” (ibid p. 203).

Consequently, nodal areas of the city connecting to the global economy will receive the highest priority in terms of investment and management, as they are sources of value creation. Urban policy is likely to be partial to perceived sources of 'value creation' and 'competitive articulation' (Graham, 2004, p. 86), such as high speed broadband in areas that are perceived to benefit the business community.

Graham (2004) draws on Mosco's work critiquing *“the glamorous place marketing and the technological and economic spin of ‘information age’ cities”* (p. 199). Notions of the Information Age and the Network Society have led to

“A frenzied wave of competitive and copycat urban planning, city development agencies around the world have sought to use the language of ‘technopoles’ to try to attain nodal status on the global innovations networks of major transnational firms” (ibid, p. 199).

Such commercially driven policies have little value for ordinary citizens, indeed these technologies can exacerbate inequality. Graham and Marvin (2001) postulate that a socio-technical separation of privileged and marginalised citizens based on their commercial prowess is determined by a plethora of mostly invisible sorting software. Examples of differential treatment for “premium” and “non-premium” customers are given in the field of internet (data traffic) prioritisation, road pricing, call centre queuing, geo-demographic sorting and passport/immigration control. Graham (2004, 2005) argues that such sorting software is increasingly present in public urban spaces, controlled by managers of public space and infrastructure providers. This is not a new phenomenon, information technologies have traditionally been used to such ends, but they are becoming ever more ubiquitous in the Network Society.

The Network Society therefore can create not only unequal geographies, but also unequal citizens whose worth is based on their consumer status.

2.8.5 Bridging digital divides

Paradoxically, whilst the case is made that ICTs increase inequality in cities, they are also be used to combat inequality. The ICTs and social inclusion debate includes the idea of “networks of opportunities” (6,1997) which are argued to be essential to social mobility. An absence of electronic networks often translates as lack of access to networks of opportunities. Indeed Longley and Singleton (2009) have demonstrated how in England material deprivation and lack of digital engagement are linked using a nation-wide geo-demographic classification of ICT usage and the Index of Multiple

Deprivation. Notably, they also show that not all digital disengagement goes hand in hand with socio-economic disadvantage. There are those citizens who opt out from the digital world by choice (see also section 3.5.5 about “have-nots and “will-nots”).

The previous UK government appeared to have adopted the view that the diffusion of information technology will deliver wider social, economic and even environmental benefits to the city and its communities:

“Technology is one of the most important tools for transformation. It can improve the life chances of socially excluded people by increasing opportunities to intervene and tackle emerging problems” (DCLG 2006a, p. 139).

In this vein, ICTs have been linked with regeneration efforts in the UK and internationally (Kingston *et al*, 2005; Kingston, 2007; Slack and Williams, 2000; Southern, 2002). Academics, however, have questioned whether the benefits from interventions will materialise, especially in deprived urban neighbourhoods (see for example Southern, 2002; Graham, 2002; van der Meer and van Winden, 2002). Southern (2002) states that ICT-led regeneration efforts have typically lacked rigorous evaluation, but they also too often rely on a logic whereby the complex issues of social exclusion are addressed with a simplistic technical fix.

Apart from regeneration, ICTs can also be incorporated into mainstream service delivery. Kingston has (2007) demonstrated that map-based applications known as Public Participation Geographic Information Systems (PPGIS) can offer affordable ways to deliver place-specific information which can increase transparency, assist in strategic planning related to public services and allocation of resources, as well as support public engagement. However, the lack of take-up on both supply and demand side means that any such benefits are largely hypothetical based on the potential of such technologies certainly in the UK (Viitanen and Kingston, 2009).

The CLG report (2008) on Local e-Government and Social Inclusion discusses ICTs and social inclusion in some detail, particularly with an emphasis on the aim of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (Cabinet Office, 2001) to reduce the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country. The case is made that the local e-government has a “vital role” in helping to meet this target (*ibid*, p. 17). The study cites that elderly people in particular could benefit from ICTs in health and social care, or for keeping in touch with friends and family, but over 80% of people in the 65+ age group had not used the internet in 2006. Moreover, over 50% of non-users hold the view that they have no need and/or interest in ICT, while key service information such as housing, job searching or training exists

increasingly online (CLG, 2008).

In terms of perception of need and takeup, the ways in which privileged and marginalized citizens use technologies differ. Based on contrasting case studies in affluent and deprived neighbourhoods in Newcastle upon Tyne, Crang *et al* (2006, p. 2551) argue that elite groups use new media technologies as “*background infrastructure to sustain privileged and intensely distanced, but time-stressed, lifestyles*” while in more marginalized neighbourhoods ICTs use is “*instrumental and episodic*”, often organised through community ties such as friends or family, or what is termed proxy access (Crang *et al*, 2006; Margetts, 2006). Empirical evidence of access and citizen demand for ICTs are explored in the benchmarking chapter 5 as well as in chapter 8.

In summary, it is widely accepted that digital exclusion in the Information Society goes hand in hand with economic, social and political exclusion. Despite the rhetoric particularly around the internet as (economically and socially) ‘empowering’ and ‘democratising’, ICTs simultaneously exacerbate inequality and facilitate differential treatment of citizens (Graham and Marvin, 2001), whilst also citizens of different socio-economic backgrounds use technology differently.

Despite their ambivalent nature, ICTs are promoted in the UK and the wider world as a means of tackling inequality – although the end result, based on the literature covered in this section, could be the opposite.

2.8.6 Urban policy interventions

Policy interventions in relation to urban-based ICTs have two strands; the first could be described as the hard layer referring to physical access, IT equipment and infrastructure, the second as the soft layer largely consisting of usage, relevant skills and content. Both hard and soft approaches are often pursued in tandem by local governments around Europe, the provision of Public Internet Access Points (PIAPs) being one of the most routine light-touch interventions (Williams, 2008).

Regarding municipal infrastructure interventions, van Winden and Woets (2004) have studied 18 European cities (including Manchester⁶) in respect of local government intervention in broadband provision. Their research uncovers that the interventions can be justified by both economic and social drivers. The schemes designed on competitiveness and place-marketing rely much on the knowledge

⁶ Chapter 6 discusses Manchester’s recent broadband infrastructure intervention.

economy thesis discussed above. On the social side, policies usually address either spatial discrimination in sparsely populated or peripheral areas, or other geographically expressed socio-economic disadvantage which results in poor access to broadband networks. In all cases there is dissatisfaction with the market outcome and public investment is deemed justifiable to intervene in the broadband market at the city level. Van Winden and Woets conclude that *“The underlying assumption is that ICTs are not merely a consumption good but rather a crucial instrument for citizens to participate fully in society”* (2004, p. 2044).

Slack and Williams (2000) engage in a debate about the internet optimists and pessimists and ICTs intervention in communities. Their study concerns the implementation of a community information system. Slack and Williams make a skeptical case for "an opportunity for intervention" as follows:

“Everyday life is saturated with interactions that have nothing (and in many cases could have nothing) do with the technological space [...] By and large, people maintain interactions without the aid of intervention of ICTs [...] One can see community ICT projects as only marginal to the issue of social exclusion” (ibid, p. 318).

Southern (2002) concludes that community-based ICT interventions are too often based on unsubstantiated assumptions about the benefits that ICT skills or access to the internet may bring to deprived neighbourhoods. According to Southern, the success of ICTs in support of neighbourhood regeneration depends on the *“vibrancy of local actors, their effort, commitment and opportunity to shape development”* (p. 697).

2.9 Chapter summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter suggests that the Network Society has polarising tendencies both in terms of place and people. There is reason to assume that private interests are served disproportionately through technology-led developments and networks which allow the ‘knowledge elites’ to further strengthen their economic and political position. However, such a view does not take into consideration the democratising potential of networked technologies. For example, the year 2005 was dubbed “the year of the digital citizen” by the BBC, acknowledging the increasing role that private individuals have in constructing the narrative of today’s media events and influencing public debate owing to Web 2.0 (The BBC, 2006a). This is part of what Castells in 1996 described as ‘users’ becoming ‘doers’, and what is today known as user-created content on the internet.

Local government, according to Castells, should have a key role in defining and bringing forth a new form of urbanism which negotiates locally the 'transterritorial networks' and combats socio-spatial exclusion and unevenness. Access to and inclusion into electronic networks has been one solution in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, but arguably a simplistic one. However, despite the skepticism about the benefits of public investment in ICTs for social inclusion, many academics including Dunleavy *et al* (2006), Mossberger *et al* (2008) and Coleman and Gotze (2001), contend that in order for a person to be fully empowered as a citizen, they should have access to the digital realm. Whilst this could be true, in areas where financial, social and political exclusion exists, the value that ICT interventions might bring is limited when digital exclusion is only one dimension of often structural inequalities.

Furthermore, there are concerns about democratic accountability as cities favour agglomerated logic and decision making in order to increase their competitiveness in the global economy, and to appear more relevant in the 'space of flows'. This, it is argued here, is one aspect of spatial transformation and it is likely to increase the distance between the powerful elites and ordinary citizens whose main contribution to the agglomerated logic is their combined headcount.

Chapter 3 offers an account of developments around e-government in the UK since 1997, embedded in New Labour's Local Government Modernisation Agenda.

3 TECHNOLOGIES OF THE STATE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of e-government policy in the UK between 1997 and 2009. This chapter also offers a perspective on the values and purposes of e-government from the supply and demand perspective, as well as on technology implementation in local government to support the methodology presented in chapter 4.

By way of introduction, e-government literature is cross-disciplinary; under this rubric a range of academic backgrounds are represented, including: urban planning, computer engineering/programming, management/business, economics, political science, public administration and law (particularly privacy/data protection). This research attempts to combine e-government literature from the public policy/administration tradition with urban policy perspectives reviewed in the previous chapter. As the title 'Technologies of the state' suggests, chapter 3 is concerned about e-government mechanisms at different scales, but the focal point is the local state and its relationship with the citizen.

The chapter is structured under the following four sections: theories of technology implementation in local government; a definition and typologies of e-government to support the conceptualisation of e-government; e-government policy under New Labour's LGMA; and a critical discussion on e-government through academic literature.

3.2 Theorising technology implementation

The field of what is widely known as e-government has traditionally been criticised for a lack of robust theoretical accounts in favour of operationally orientated and descriptive contributions (Jaeger, 2003 and 2005; Campbell, 1996). Jaeger (2005) posits that most inquiries into e-government focus on services, technical capacities and usage information, whereas the underlying goals and intentions as well as social impacts of e-government remain relatively unexplored. An intellectual deficit remains in critiquing e-government and challenging the assumption that e-government will be beneficial "*no matter how it is implemented*" (*ibid*, p 703). This section aims to build a critical framework for analysing the empirical research on e-government.

3.2.1 Managerial rationalism in local government

The work by Danziger *et al* (1982) on technology implementation in the field of urban planning has been credited by Campbell (1996) as one of the best known series of studies in this field. Their volume '*Computers and politics – High technology in American Local Governments*' introduces this body of work; the central theory of managerial rationalism is summarised below. The relevance of the chosen text lies within its empirical grounding: local government and urban information systems in particular.

Managerial rationalism is mainly concerned with the economy and efficiency goals of administrative reform, enhanced service delivery, operational performance and quality of information (Kraemer and Dutton, 1982). Technology projects guided by managerial rationalism in local government:

"...tend to extend and reinforce the prevailing biases of governmental structures and processes. Those who control local government decisions have adapted computer technology to serve existing structures of influence and control, by determining the kinds of applications adopted, and by selectively utilizing available computer-based information." (ibid, p. 193)

Managerial rationalism in urban data systems typically serves the interests of the modernisers (usually technocrats and bureaucrats) over elected members in local government. The result is that the officers can drive organisational change and innovation to suit their agendas. Kraemer and Dutton argue that "*computing can be viewed as malleable but certainly not apolitical*" (ibid, p. 193).

In the local government context it is pivotal to consider how citizens' interests are incorporated into technological change and modernisation efforts. Kling and Kraemer (1982) note that "*many descriptions of local government computing label the technology as one that 'serves citizens'*" (p. 195). On the basis of e-government policy in the UK reviewed later in this chapter, it can be concluded that most of it claims to serve citizens' interests.

Managerial rationalism in relation to citizens adds a new dimension as follows:

"Computing is conceived not only as a means of enhancing efficiency, but also as a means of providing new services and achieving greater equity in the distribution of services. Moreover, the technology is perceived as providing citizens with additional choices, rather than as limiting or coercing" (Kling and Kraemer, 1982, p. 195).

Here, *public choice* is identified as a key element, which corroborates with the discussion on technology developments as part of the LGMA in section 3.4.

There are inherent conflicting objectives in what could be described as managerial rationalism vis-à-vis the organisation as opposed to the community, which are often unacknowledged by those making decisions. If the citizen-centric ideology was carried out in practice, more effort and resources would be committed to “*activities that provide direct services and make more choices available to citizens*” (*ibid*, p. 195). Kling and Kraemer argue that this is not often the case; instead, the outcomes are shaped by what has been termed a ‘reinforcement politics’. A reinforcement politics suggests that technological tools serve “*whatever social forces are dominant in organizational settings*” (*ibid*, p. 196). If reinforcement politics explain what happens at the micro level within an organisation such as a local authority, parallels can be drawn with Castells’ idea that, at the macro level, the space of flows plays host to (reinforcing) dominant social practices in society.

In the local government-citizen relationship, a reinforcement politics would result in emphasis placed on “*those government activities that serve the traditional and dominant values and interests of citizens in the community*” (Kling and Kraemer, 1982, p. 196). These traditional areas of interests are understood as concerns about the efficiency of government operations and the provision of basic services, resulting in increased technology to support areas such as “*routine administrative activities, basic local government services, bureaucratic control over the recipients of social services such as welfare, health and recreation*”. Here, the logic supporting the adoption of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems in local government, which tend to increase the service provider’s control over the customer, is evident (see 3.6.1).

Furthermore, in terms of power relationships, Zimmerman and Finger (2005) found that ICTs in local government tend to shift the power balance in favour of the administration in relation to both citizens and employees, corroborating with the theory of managerial rationalism. Conversely, in relation to businesses and other agencies with whom local government is ‘networked’ through ‘partnerships’, local government was found to lose power (Zimmerman and Finger, 2005).

3.2.2 Three theories of technology implementation

The previous section outlined the influence of managerial rationalism in local government, arguing that a reinforcement politics is a likely outcome when local government tries to balance competing priorities of efficiency and providing choice for citizen-customers. The principles of CRM systems fitted with the reinforcement politics scenario. This section presents three alternative approaches to conceptualise

the dynamics of technology implementation in local government. Here, the aim is to uncover the underlying processes by which computing technologies are integrated into the work of an organisation, based on Campbell's (1996) work on Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

Campbell's contribution draws upon the work by Danziger *et al* (1982) introduced above. Her conceptualization of technological implementation incorporates managerial rationalism alongside technological determinism and social interactionism as alternative models for implementation. According to Campbell, implementing computer-based systems is about transforming ideas into action. As such the lessons and well-documented difficulties in the field of policy implementation are applicable and should not be overlooked. Campbell highlights that: *"the social and political context in which a policy is being introduced influences the chances of realizing its goals and also the extent to which they are modified during implementation"* (*ibid*, p.100).

Technological determinism

Technological determinism as a guiding principle for technology implementation is a close relative of managerial rationalism, but more rooted in the technological utopias which fuelled much of the early literature on the transformative powers of technology vis-à-vis urban development and democracy, also known as "post-urban fantasies" (Graham, 2004, see 2.4). *"Technological determinism is imbued with an overall sense of inevitability about the progress of automation, and is optimistic about the effect it will have"* (Campbell, 1996, p. 101). An embedded instrumental rationality assumes that a technological solution will improve organisational effectiveness and correct an operational weakness. Equally, the wider implications of the technology, for example on citizens, are rarely considered, the underlying assumption being that technologies are inherently 'good' (*ibid*, p. 101).

Managerial rationalism

Campbell (1996) contends that most technology implementation in the field of GIS is based on assumptions of managerial rationality, assuming thus that operational, managerial and strategic benefits will automatically follow once a system has been fully implemented. *"This approach implies that once the optimal plan has been formed, it can as a matter of course be implemented fully. Such an approach is sometimes called the cookbook method of system implementation"* (*ibid*, p.103). Other typical characteristics of this type of implementation are the tendency to adopt a 'corporate' approach to increase data sharing, with the aim to inform better

decision-making. Such thinking is rooted in management science which assumes that *“organizations are arenas of rationality where logical strategies consistently turn into actions that improve organizational efficiency”* (ibid, p.103).

Social interactionism

The social interactionist perspective challenges this basic assumption of logical, efficient and predictable outcomes achieved through the implementation of ‘optimal plans’. Instead, user interaction and acceptance are prioritized according to a socially constructed view of technology: *“Implementation is a process of learning in which not all the participants derive the same conclusions from events, learn at the same speed, or even feel sufficiently motivated to participate ...[which is why it is not unusual for] “a technically operational system to remain unused, or be employed in a way that differs greatly from the original intentions”* (Campbell, 1996, p. 104).

Social interactionism anticipates that the differing motives of individuals result in disputes over the objectives and priorities of any given project. An *“underlying culture”* is thought to be embedded in an organisation which can be understood through the *“procedures, rituals and exercise of power”*, therefore, social interactionism assumes that *“implementation is regarded as a matter of organizational politics, not managerial rationalism”* (ibid, p. 104).

Successful implementation projects are likely to be based on an understanding of an agency’s social and political processes and rarely attempt a radical overhaul of existing practices, particularly in a change-resistant environment, such as local government. In this vein, Asgarkhani (2005, p. 158) remarks that the introduction of e-services to local government is not primarily a technical exercise, but rather *“an attempt to improve the political and social environment”*. The introduction of ICTs, Asgarkhani argues, does not automatically create a better or more open government. Successful outcomes require a wider perspective beyond technology infrastructure, incorporating social structure, cultural values and attitudes, governance processes and ethical issues.

The social-interactionist perspective shifts the focus onto the potential consequences of technologies based on the values underpinning their development and use. This is important, as new technologies tend to have unanticipated ‘side-effects’. Campbell (1996) concludes:

“Those that fear the consequences of the fast-developing information superhighway should be careful not to focus attention on the technology

alone; the use and abuse of such systems will simply reflect the dominant beliefs of society and, at a more detailed level, of individual organization.” (ibid, p. 105)

3.2.3 The values of technology development

In the previous section, Campbell (1996) demonstrated how technologies *per se* are neither ‘good’ nor ‘bad’, rather, the way in which they are used and the values underpinning their implementation are central to the unanticipated outcomes. Similar conclusions have been drawn by Jorgensen and Klay (2007) who argue that “technology is malleable” and thus normative principles are required to guide public sector IT projects. The combination of capitalism and new technology raises concern: *“Technology in the context of a highly competitive capitalism simultaneously creates and destroys opportunity. If sufficient opportunity fails to reach large segments of society, societal order and democratic processes could be threatened (ibid, p. 297).*

Furthermore, the values of technology development can be appraised in light of the themes of the Network Society and the new economy discussed earlier in chapter 2.5. Jorgensen and Klay conclude that *“the new global, technology oriented economy is aggressively capitalistic”*, while there is a growing inequality in the distribution of the wealth (*ibid, p. 297*). This brings to the fore the role of public administrators: *“to help construct the social glue that is needed to hold a diverse society together. But the degree of diversity that is to come is uncertain. Some of that uncertainty is due to uncertainties about the future effects of technology” (ibid, p. 296).*

Supporting the view of the critics of the Network Society thesis who argue that governments and their actions are too often obscured in a technologically deterministic interpretation, Jorgensen and Klay claim that *“public administrators are active participants in deciding how highly malleable technology is developed and put to use” (ibid, p. 299)*. The basis of this argument is that, historically, governments have had a pivotal role in the development of such key technologies as machine tabulation, electronic computers, microprocessors and the internet. E-government policy in the UK has sponsored a thriving industry of software and hardware developers. The London School of Economics (LSE) claims that the UK has one of the world’s most concentrated government IT markets. In 2009, the total government budget was £620.685bn. The exact total cost of government IT (staff included) is estimated at around £17bn per annum, which fuels a burgeoning private industry (LSE, 2010).

Viewed from this perspective, the core message of Jorgensen and Klay (2007) is that a normative framework is required to guide the way technology is commissioned and implemented by public administrators. Influenced by the work of Etzioni and Fukuyama, Jorgensen and Klay make the case for adopting the principles of democratic communitarian theory for this purpose. The social underpinnings of a democratic society, such as individual liberty and citizenship encompassing “rights” and “responsibilities”, are seen as key elements to a high trust society. In such high trust societies where individual liberties are secure, democratic processes are argued to function better and economies to be more stable (Fukuyama, 1995).

In light of Kling and Kraemer's (1982) reinforcement politics, an organisation is likely to perpetuate through its ICT implementation any existing (power) biases and values. As a concluding note to this section, the important message to carry forward is to understand and analyse the underlying values of IT projects, rather than focus on the technical functionality. For this research, the values ought to be considered in light of (local) democracy and citizenship.

3.3 Defining e-government

As a starting point, for the purposes of this study, Brown's (2005) definition of e-government is offered:

“Going well beyond analogies to e-commerce, it encompasses the four domains of governance and public administration: the state's economic and social programs; its relationships with the citizen and the rule of law (e-democracy), its internal operations and its relationship with the international environment” (p. 1).

E-government is part of the global technological revolution that is changing the way governments, businesses, communities and citizens operate and interact with each other, encouraging network-building, external collaboration and customer services (Ho, 2002). Moreover, e-government in Europe and beyond has become widely accepted as an enabler for good governance, *“placing it at the core of public management modernization and reform”* (Baptista, 2005, p. 171). It is therefore logical to take into account supra-national elements and influence when building knowledge about e-government. As Brown (2005), points out:

“With its features of convergence and interdependence, e-government is a part of the accelerating process of globalization, which has a public sector as well as private sector and civil society dimensions.” (p.253)

This definition broadens the idea of e-government into the “economic and social

programs” as well as “relationship with the international environment” meaning that e-government encompasses much more than back-office IT systems or a new website. This research puts forward a concept of e-government that includes the role of technology in the government's programme of modernisation, but also in entrepreneurial policy responses to globalisation and the 'governance-beyond-the-state' themes discussed previously in section 2.7. This definition also influences the conceptual framework put forward in chapter 4.1.2.

3.3.1 E-government typologies

The two types of e-government that are put forward in the typology (see Table 1 overleaf) are broadly based on the philosophical underpinnings of democracy and citizenship; the consumer-citizen versus the active citizen, and liberal versus republican democracy (see also chapter 2.6.1). Tolbert and Mossberger (2006, pp. 356-357) describe them as the “*entrepreneurial approach*” and the “*participatory approach*” to e-government. The entrepreneurial approach is argued to have its roots in New Public Management (NPM) focusing on the achievement of efficient, customer driven services through the means of technology with strong links to the efficiency agenda. This is supportive of the consumerist notion of citizenship and sits at the liberal end of democratic thought. The participatory approach in by contrast addresses the democratic renewal, accountability, transparency and public trust agenda which has been a concern for modern governments due to the falling voter turnouts and general public disenchantment with government institutions. Many see participatory governance enabled by technology as a potential remedy for the perceived legitimacy crisis and lack of public trust (Clift, 2002; Fagan *et al*, 2006; Tolbert and Mossberger, 2006; Welch *et al*, 2005). The philosophical grounding of this interpretation is inspired by the 'republican' model of participatory democracy.

Table 1: A typology of e-government

	<i>Approach to e-government</i>	
	Entrepreneurial	Participatory
<i>Key characteristics</i>		
<i>Philosophical grounding</i>	Liberal democracy, New Public Management, top-down government	Republican democracy, bottom-up governance, communicative rationality
<i>Citizenship regime</i>	Consumerist	Participatory

<i>Intended outcome</i>	Service improvements and accountability, customer satisfaction, efficiency savings, lean government , ease of access	Citizen empowerment, increased political participation and trust in government, informed & active citizenry
-------------------------	--	---

(Adapted from Tolbert and Mossberger, 2006)

In summary, there is a wide consensus in e-government research that e-government implementation has focused narrowly on the “entrepreneurial” side, or in other words administrative and transactional processes, at the cost of “participatory” or the e-democracy domain (e.g. Jaeger, 2005; Mahrer and Krimmer, 2005; Kavanaugh *et al*, 2005; Thomas and Streib, 2005; Reddick, 2009).

The second typology (see Table 2) relates to the electronic interface between citizens and government. It is particularly useful for this research as it can be used as a framework for citizen-initiated contacts over an IT infrastructure vis-à-vis local government. The three definitions, as categorised by Thomas and Streib (2005), describe why citizens might visit government websites as 1) e-commerce, 2) e-democracy; and 3) e-research.

This framework is elaborated and slightly modified below in terms of the names and definitions to provide a better match with the focus of this research. E-commerce encompasses online transactions that citizens undertake, for example paying council tax or applying for a school place online. For the purpose of this study it is judged appropriate to rename the category as “transactional” rather than “e-commerce” to emphasise the variety and nature of transactions that citizens may perform online in relation to government services and that these may not have any commercial bearing.

E-democracy, according to Thomas and Streib (2005), refers to citizens’ efforts to participate or influence public decision making or policy. For example, this could be in the form of an online consultation response, feedback (positive or negative), casting a vote or taking part in an online poll or a discussion forum. Since democracy could refer to different types of democracy, this category is renamed as “participatory” to express its philosophical grounding in the active citizenship paradigm.

E-research describes the use of government websites as sources of information for various purposes. Information searches relating to e-commerce and e-democracy

are excluded from the original typology by Thomas and Streib, however, it is argued here that the act of searching for information in relation to the above two categories may or may not result in a transaction or participation, therefore all information acquisition is included in the third classification that is renamed simply as “informative”. Even if the informational side of government websites is often labeled as the most basic, even primitive, form of government online presence (Moon, 2002; Streib and Navarro, 2006) it is a precursor and often a necessary bridge to the more advanced use of e-government in either transactional or participatory capacity.

Table 2: A typology of citizen-initiated e-government interaction

	Transactional	Participatory	Informative
Examples of the purpose of citizen-initiated contact	Payment of tax, fines or rates, renewing library books, submitting a planning application, applying for housing, a school place or employment with the council etc	Voting, making a complaint/providing feedback regarding a service, responding to public consultation, taking part in online discussion forums	Searching for information through a government website about anything in the public domain, e.g. submitted planning applications, school places, LA committees, contact information for city officials etc
E-government typology	Entrepreneurial	Participatory	Entrepreneurial and participatory

(Adapted from Thomas and Streib, 2005)

In short, e-government can serve various purposes underpinned by different values and philosophies. The next section discusses New Labour’s approach to local government reform in order to contextualise e-government in the ‘long decade’. This is intended to inform this research of the underlying values which have informed technology implementation in local government during that time.

3.4 Local Government Modernisation Agenda 1997- 2009

This section introduces the main academic debates associated with the modernisation of local government in the UK since the general election of 1997, focusing on the Third Way and New Public Management (NPM). As part of their modernisation programme, the Labour government made a pledge to make services joined-up and accountable, rejuvenate local democracy and engage citizens in local decisions to create 'strong and prosperous communities' (DCLG, 2006a).

The main drives behind the Local Government Modernisation Agenda (LGMA) are conceived of as poor performance, lack of public trust in government and increasing political apathy (Cowell and Martin, 2003; Martin, 2002; Tewdwr-Jones *et al*, 2006). The backdrop to the post-1997 New Labour years were three decades of Conservative government, which have been argued to be particularly damaging to local government in the UK in terms of eroding their power and capacity. *"By the mid-1990's local government in Britain had become associated [...] with poor services and untalented leadership with little vision and little connection to the communities which it claimed to represent"* (Corry and Parker, 2005, p. 2).

Much of the LGMA is built on the assumption that the citizen-customer is chiefly interested in receiving an efficient service. Driving up performance through disaggregation, competition and incentivisation is thought to generate support/ trust for the administration. NPM has resulted in a plethora of business management practices injected into public services, based on the argument that public choice increases efficiency and customer satisfaction (Dunleavy *et al*, 2006). The public choice theory is typical of NPM style reform. Coming into power after years of Conservative government, arguably New Labour failed to disassociate from NPM, despite their rhetoric on the "Third Way" which was aimed at mixing and matching principles of free markets/deregulation with a renewed centre-left agenda for the state to respond to "global challenges" (Giddens, 2006; Finlayson, 1999; Rose, 2000).

A major part of the LGMA was the re-organisation of governance by way of partnerships, networks and contractual arms-length arrangements with (increasingly non-state) service providers and stakeholders (Benington, 2001; Coaffee and Johnston, 2005; Coulson, 2004; Garcia, 2006; Rutherford, 2006; Southern, 2001), discussed earlier in section 2.7. The new governance arrangements are rooted to a great extent in NPM philosophy according to which governments should 'steer not row' (Phillips and Orsini, 2002). This has also been described as the 'rolling back of

the state' (see for example Held 1996; Jessop, 1997) resulting in a 'leaner and meaner' state with reduced capacity and services.

Critics of the 'roll back' are concerned about applying market/consumerist principles to the public sector. They argue that private sector practices bring about inequality due to the inherent bias embedded in capitalism and also by obscuring political accountability through increased delegation to unaccountable bodies and emphases on customer satisfaction (e.g. Aberbach and Christensen, 2005). Perhaps concerned about the NPM image of the 'roll back' that was conceived during the Thatcher years, New Labour have developed the 'enabling state' concept where the state sector is seen as supporting community leadership and coordinating the delivery networks that exist under the new local forms of governance (DCLG, 2006a; Coaffee and Johnston, 2005).

Arguably influential in New Labour policy, the Third Way has been said to depoliticise the practice of government leaving a space for a pragmatic "what matters is what works" mentality (e.g. Davies, 2006; Powell, 2000; see also Southern, 2001 for the management of regeneration). This has been termed "sociological determinism" by Rose (2000). Third Way thinking suggests that the forces of globalisation are making the nation-state less relevant and that state power should therefore be devolved to communities because the central government is unable to respond at an appropriate level to local dynamics and demands expressed and experienced by communities (Rose, 2000). Here, Third Way thinking corroborates with the central themes of the Network Society thesis reviewed in the previous chapter.

3.4.1 Citizenship in the Local Government Modernisation Agenda (LGMA)

The LGMA of New Labour sought to devolve power closer to the citizen. This "*double devolution*" all the way to the level below the Town Hall, the government argued, would empower citizens and create "sustainable communities" (Miliband, 2006). This trend is part of what has been termed "new localism" (e.g. Corry and Stoker, 2002; Doak and Parker, 2005; Morphet, 2004). Since 1997, while in power, New Labour modernisation policies attempted to address the democratic deficit by rejuvenating local democracy (e.g. Andrews and Turner, 2006) and empowering 'active citizens' (e.g. Raco *et al*, 2006). Much of the policy-making in this field was expressed in new localism described above and relied upon so-called 'active citizens'.. Howard and Sweeting (2007) offer a typology based on the way in which local citizens and (state) institutions interacted in English neighbourhoods under New Labour. The authors posit that different variants of democracy are not mutually exclusive in an empirical sense and indeed they are likely to co-exist at a neighbourhood level, although their

conceptual underpinnings are based on opposing models of citizenship and forms of participation, summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Types of citizenship and democracy in neighbourhood governance

Democracy	Values/ assumptions	Forms of participation	Citizenship
Representative	Electoral accountability, competing interests	Elections, political parties	Voter
Participatory	Deliberation, interaction, consensus	Deliberative fora e.g. tenants' and residents' associations, project boards/steering groups of neighbourhood regeneration initiatives	Active citizen
Market	Consumer sovereignty, responsiveness	Choice between providers, focus groups, surveys	Consumer

(After Howard and Sweeting, 2007, p. 107)

However, the Labour Government was criticised for effectively tightening central control through policies and central targets, rather than empowering the local tier or citizens. This has been described as “vertical” joining up as opposed to “horizontal” joining-up of services (Cowell and Martin, 2003). It has been suggested that such contradictory trends of neighbourhood level governance and increased state controls could signpost a “schizophrenic” attitude towards power. Davies (2006, p. 254) argued that a simultaneous high level of central control and rhetoric of devolution has been in part caused by the “*sheer flexibility and obscurity of the term ‘community’*” as social domain.

These changes at the local level are said to have led to the depoliticisation of representative local government where local authorities and elected representatives have a diminished role whilst power and responsibility is channeled towards the central government on one hand and to the consumer-citizens on the other (Raco et al, 2006; Coulson, 2004). In this increasingly difficult environment, it has been argued that “pragmatic localism” emerged where local actors find ways to shape top-down national policies to reflect the particular complexities and local conditions (Coaffee

and Johnston, 2005; Coaffee and Headlam, 2007).

As explained above, the modernisation agenda of the New Labour government since 1997 was largely characterised by customer focus, increased choice and performance management that were based on the consumer-driven model of citizenship. Measures were introduced with the aim to empower the consumer-citizen with a choice over service providers and methods of access and in so doing the public sector mimicked private businesses in order to improve efficiency. Such reforms have been criticised for undermining the system of accountability through political representation in favour of accountability through consumer sovereignty (Aberbach and Christensen, 2005; Cowell and Martin, 2003; Garcia, 2006; Downe and Martin, 2006; Twedwr-Jones *et al*, 2006). Similar concerns were raised in chapter 2.6-2.7 where the democratic deficit and the distance between the state and the civil society were discussed.

Despite the New Labour's affinity towards private sector performance culture, based on the argument that public choice increases efficiency and customer satisfaction, the fit between public and private sector approaches has been found wanting from a number of perspectives, the most significant of which pertain to the citizen-consumer dilemma as follows:

- Premium customers get better services in the private sector. This flies in the face of democratic principles of treating citizens as equals. Barnet Council was the first in the UK to adopt the "Easy Council" no frills approach to service delivery in 2009, and has since been subject to legal challenge by the High Court (The Times, 2010).
- Private enterprises are not democratically governed; their accountability is towards private shareholders whose primary interest is profit. Very few public services can make a profit, therefore 'value for money' is used as a proxy for profit; however these are clearly not the same. Value for money in the public sphere can only be achieved by taking into account the collective best interest of the citizenry: the fluid but fundamental 'common good'.
- The public sector needs to address market failure; areas where the private sector fails to deliver to social need or is indeed harmful to society and the commons. By definition, the public sector therefore has customers and markets that have been rejected or negatively impacted upon by the private sector as a result of its basis on the private profit motive.

- A number of public services are de facto monopolies without any viable alternatives.
- The customer-logic is rooted in 'choice' – customers in a competitive market can choose a different provider if they are unsatisfied, therefore the assumption is that standards are kept high through competition. Citizens cannot choose a different provider for democratic governance (other than through a revolution). The only choice is to disengage from politics, a strategy which is proving increasingly popular.

The above list of items makes plain that there are deep-seated, inherent incompatibilities between the modus operandi of the private sector and public sector spheres. However, when we consider how the private sector treats its customers, cracks soon begin to appear in the 'ideal type' market efficiency thesis even within the confines of the commercial world. We have recently witnessed first-hand the error of the idealised logic that the free market is infallible. In the UK, the government's £846bn rescue package for the banking sector following the collapse and near collapse of several major national and international players in 2008 is an extreme but useful example. It resulted in the equivalent of £40k of debt for every household in Britain which caused wide public discontent (The Times, 2009b, The Guardian 2010a).

Third Way politics carried mixed messages about the conceptualisation of citizenship and the nature of democracy. This inquiry would suggest that there is confusion around the underpinning philosophy of citizenship in Third Way polity which derives essentially from its lack of grounding in any political philosophy about the nature of society (Powell, 2000; Finlayson, 1999). Instead, Third Way thinkers attach political judgement to a kind of "*sociological determinism*" (Rose, 2000, p. 1396) where by a pragmatic response can be derived from a sociological analysis of any given phenomenon. Proponents argue that the Third Way is a distinctive concept and that understanding the condition of contemporary society by means of sociology gives access to 'truths' about the present which legitimate political decisions (Giddens, 2006).

This slippage from normative to descriptive means that Third Way policies drew upon a multiplicity of philosophical themes mainly rooted in liberal representative democracy (see chapter 2.6). The novel element from the point of view of citizens is

the tendency towards "*therapeutic individualism*" (Rose 2000, p. 1397) that fosters lifestyle, identity and choice. Third Way rhetoric created a vision for civil society where individual citizens are technologically competent and socially responsible members of communities (Giddens, 2006). Many of society's challenges or the so-called 'wicked issues' could be dealt with through greater citizen participation and responsibilisation, thus an important link can be observed between citizenship and the discussion on urban policy and neighbourhoods as sites of policy intervention (Smith *et al*, 2007).

As Western democracies tend to adopt NPM style policies, the terms citizen and customer are often used interchangeably. Davies (2006) argued that New Labour was committed to:

"...two diametrically opposed notions of the self that together squeeze out the possibility for enlightened, autonomous citizenship. These belong to communitarianism on the one hand and consumerism on the other, two moral agendas which underpin the vast majority of contemporary policy developments" (p. 1).

Recent research into citizen engagement in the UK has raised questions about the effectiveness of the outcomes at community level due to a tendency among local authorities to favour 'consumerist' engagement strategies (Andrews and Turner, 2006). A resulting *consumer democracy* or *marketplace democracy* often fails to make a real impact on communities and may even exacerbate inequalities of access and capacity for engagement when powerful groups have distinct advantages due to their skills and knowledge (Murdoch *et al*, 2000; Needham, 2004).

Needham's (2004) research into Oxford Council's public consultation reported that there appeared to be a lack of interest among the citizenry towards local government business which brings to the fore the question of take-up and demand for citizen involvement, online or otherwise, raised by the critics of Habermas (see 2.7). Rather than label citizens as disinterested, it is worth noting that trust and perceived benefits from involvement may be highly relevant to this debate. Needham's study between 1997-2003 found that the citizenship regime applied by the administration was consumerist, further reinforced by evidence in e-government policy and practice. The rationale for the consumerist approach was improving service standards, efficiency and accountability motivated by rising expectations of service users, which are all true of the UK e-government policy to date (more about e-government policy later in this chapter).

Citizen engagement is often carried out by way of stakeholder involvement or by

information dissemination and consultation on pre-drafted policies which is more resource and cost-efficient than bottom-up participatory engagement (Andrews and Turner, 2006). This type of practice is primarily intended to increase the degree of buy-in and support for government policies. Such citizen engagement has been described by Fagan *et al* as “*administrative*” consultation practice, where: “*citizens are seen as sources of information, rather than as partners in decision-making*” (Fagan *et al*, 2006, p. 39).

If indeed Third Way politics were sociologically deterministic then they relied to a great extent on 'expert' analysis of 'facts' that have been obtained from citizens as part of consultation and/or research. A central question emerges relating to the role of citizens either as active agents in generating knowledge and shaping the public agenda or as passive recipients and/or sources of information.

In summary, the LGMA sought to rejuvenate local democracy and 'active citizenship', but the policies in practice were based on conflicting conceptions of both democracy and citizenship. Consumerist interpretation of citizenship and market rationality in public services dominated the local government reform agenda, under which the local e-government agenda emerged. A brief history of the UK e-government policy is provided below.

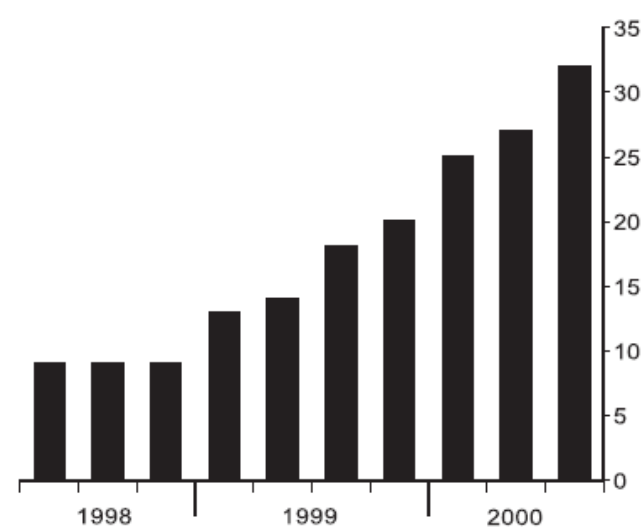
3.5 A long decade: from Government Direct to Directgov

3.5.1 Introduction

In recent times, technology has been at the heart of local government modernisation in England and there has been a proliferation of policies dealing with technological change (Morphet, 2008). The first step by the UK government to create an e-government strategy was taken in November 1996 under the premiership of the Conservative Prime Minister John Major. The Green Paper entitled 'Government Direct' was the first-ever Green Paper to be available as a CD-ROM as well as for downloading from the internet. It set a vision which sounds surprisingly familiar today; to shape public services around the needs of the user/citizen, identity management and data sharing protocols (The Guardian, 2006; Margetts, 2006). The general election of May 1997 brought about a regime change and a New Labour government led by Tony Blair. The newly elected Prime Minister announced a target that by 2002, 25% of transactions with government would be electronic. In March 2000, the target was revised to 100% by 2005. The pace of diffusion of the internet in the business of government in the early years of New Labour was remarkable. Margetts (2006, p.1) points out that the internet had "*barely touched UK society or the government*" in 1995. By 2005, there were over 2500 government websites (Cabinet Office, 2005, p. 10). This trend was more than matched in the private lives of citizens. Figure 1 below shows how domestic access to the internet more than trebled from 9% to over 30% in just two years between 1998 and 2000, although the expansion was experienced mainly in higher earning professional households (ONS, 2000).

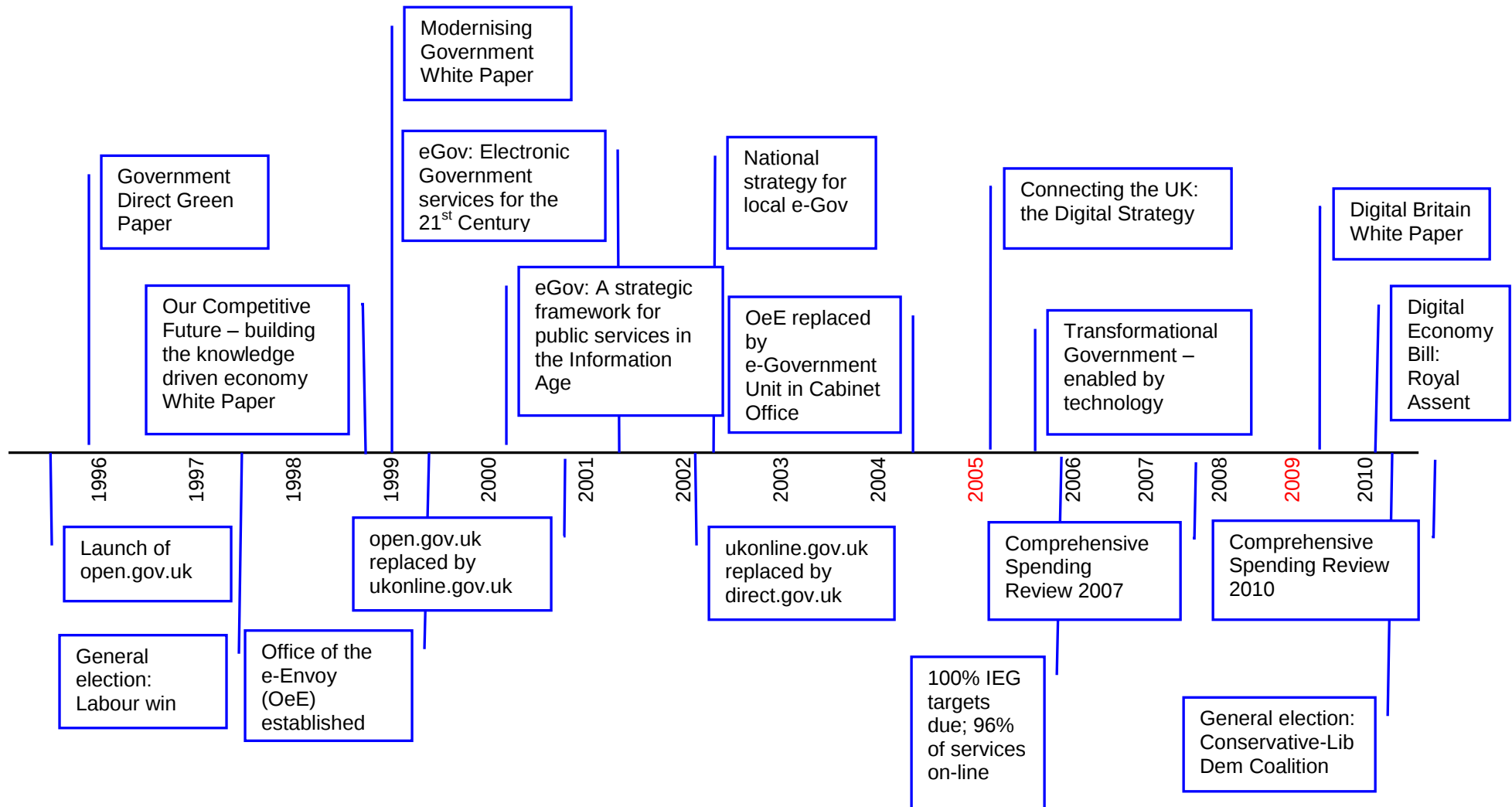
To illustrate the key milestones in e-government policy, a timeline of policy developments starting with the publication of the 1996 Green Paper 'Government Direct' is provided overleaf in Figure 2.

Figure 1: Home access to the Internet 1998-2000



(source: ONS, 2000)

Figure 2: Key e-Government policy milestones in the UK since 1996



3.5.2 Local e-government

The development of local e-government in England was shaped by Whitehall who controlled local authorities with a raft of performance indicators to which funding was tied. The Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) policy and performance management framework exemplified this top-down control (Beynon-Davies and Martin, 2004).

The local e-government agenda was conceived in the *'Modernising local government: in touch with the people'* White Paper (DTLR, 1998). It did not discuss "e-government" as a term, but touched upon the concept of e-voting to revitalise local democracy and created a vision for various public service providers working together by way of one stop shops, electronic service delivery and single site offices. Private Finance Initiative featured strongly in the context of the government's modernising vision for the local tier, including in the area of ICT solutions (Morphet, 2008). This corroborates with Mosco's (2004) claim that ICT policies encourage privatisation in the public sector (see 2.8.4).

Great momentum for local e-government was built between the years 2000 and 2005 when the local e-government landscape was influenced to a great extent by the IEG targets announced by the Prime Minister in 2000. Furthermore, the *'Strong local leadership – quality public services'* White Paper published in 2001 stressed that "...effective grasp of the transforming potential of e-government will be a key factor in the council's capacity to improve" (DTLR, 2001, p. 35). However, the key document for local authorities in England was *'Modern councils, modern services – access for all'* (DTLR, 2001) which set the framework for the delivery and funding of the IEG targets (Beynon-Davies and Martin, 2004). The IEG statements prepared by local authorities were seen as a route map to a so-called 'e-revolution' and driving forward the wider modernisation agenda (DTLR, 2001). Better services and efficiency gains were deemed as the main drivers for implementing e-government; the White Paper forecasted "dramatic efficiency gains alongside transformation of effectiveness of services" (DTLR 2001, p 35).

In terms of funding for English local authorities, the White Paper announced £25m in 2001-02 to support the 25 pathfinder partnerships involving over 100 local authorities and a further £325m in the following two years to help all local authorities meet the

100% 'e-enablement' targets by 2005. This funding has been criticised for being inadequate to support the implementation of the e-government targets locally (Lucas, 2003). Case studies by Lucas (2003) discovered that one English local authority had estimated the true annual cost of supporting successful e-government delivery to be nearer to £1 million instead of the £200,000 capital grant that was offered. The concerns about the IEG regime raised by Lucas included the adequacy of local authority infrastructures and the maintenance costs of e-government programmes that had not been budgeted for.

A central policy document for local authorities was the '*National Strategy for Local e-government*' (ODPM, 2002). Local e-government was assigned here with three key characteristics: 1) transforming services; 2) renewing local democracy; and 3) promoting local economic vitality. The strategy also set three criteria echoing the national e-government priorities to evaluate the successes of local initiatives: 1) availability of electronic services; 2) take-up; and 3) value for money provided by local e-government (ODPM, 2002).

An important observation here is that at this stage, the renewal of local democracy had not been assigned any formal criteria in terms of evaluating the success of the programme. With a view to accelerate the progress of e-government implementation in local councils, the government published mandatory guidance on 'priority outcomes' for local e-government (Morphet, 2008). Among these priority outcomes were "Accessibility of services" and "Making it easy for citizens to do business with the council", for which Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems were prescribed as the preferred technology (ODPM, 2002). The prevalent trend of centralised back office data systems with "front of house" call centres and "one stop shops" in local government is international and stems from North America (Ho, 2002; Reddick, 2009). This model of 'customer-centric' service delivery has become the norm in English local government under LGMA (see 3.6.1 for CRM in local government).

3.5.3 Transformation transformed?

This section questions the extent to which the national policy agenda changed before and after the fruition of the 100% e-enablement targets in 2005.

Looking back on the early developments of e-government in the UK from Whitehall's

point of view, it can be argued that e-government made it to the forefront of the political agenda in 1999 when the Labour government launched its Modernising Government White Paper. The Office of the e-Envoy (OeE) was established in the same year to provide visible leadership in an area previously lacking ownership and strategic direction. The Modernising Government White Paper (Cabinet Office, 1999) made a notable commitment to use technology to modernise the business of government:

“The Government must bring about a fundamental change in the way we use IT. We must modernise the business of government itself achieving joined up working between different parts of government and providing new, efficient and convenient ways for citizens and businesses to communicate with government and to receive services.” (p. 45)

The period that the OeE was coordinating the delivery of the e-government strategy probably saw the most rapid changes in the history of e-government in Britain. The OeE launched the short-lived UK online strategy in 2000, followed by the associated government gateway website ukonline.gov.uk, replacing the first UK government portal ‘open.gov.uk’. The UK’s pledge to make 100% of local government transactions e-enabled by 2005 was in tune with the EU’s Lisbon agenda and strategically well-timed for the European Commission’s eEurope 2005 targets, as well as for the forthcoming European Information Society Benchmarking Report (EC, 2005b; see benchmarking chapter 5.2.1). Britain’s 100% e-enablement targets exceeded those set by many other European countries, not surprisingly at the time the UK was also investing more money into promoting e-government than many others with a track record in electronic service delivery. However, in September 2004 the OeE was replaced by a new e-Government Unit within the Cabinet Office, headed up by Ian Watmore. The new unit would launch the ‘*Transformational Government – enabled by technology*’ strategy (Cabinet Office, 2005) in November 2005 (Margetts, 2006; the Guardian, 2006).

Two main documents, ‘*Transformational Government – enabled by technology*’ (Cabinet Office, 2005) and the ‘*Connecting UK: the Digital Strategy*’ (Cabinet Office and DTI, 2005), both published in 2005, provided a new focus to the e-government agenda. The latter, launched in April 2005, makes a bold statement about Britain being the first nation to close the digital divide. The overarching aim of the Digital Strategy was to mainstream digital access and the use of ICTs to improve the quality of life and for the nation to remain globally competitive. In this strategy, the government also considered moving to wholly digital delivery in suitable service areas.

The main incentive for local government was the “Digital Challenge” competition for local authorities to boost e-government take-up and to establish universal local access to digital services by 2008.⁷

As mentioned above, the Digital Strategy also launched an important part of the latest phase in the government’s modernisation programme what would be known as ‘transformational government’ (t-government). And so ‘e-government’ was re-branded as ‘t-government’. The new vision was driven by the challenges that globalisation brings about: economic productivity, social justice and public service reform. Citizen centricity was at the heart of ‘transformational government’ aiming for choice and personalisation, and a slicker public sector. The benefits of the new, electronic channels should be clearly demonstrated to stakeholders to encourage channel migration. All this, according to the Prime Minister, had the potential for “*real transformation of public services*” (Cabinet Office, 2005, p. 1).

Having reviewed the path that the government has travelled to swap the ‘e’ for ‘t’, it is useful to ask was the ‘old vision’ much different? E-government made it to the forefront of British politics in 1999 as part of the wider modernising government agenda. The e-government strategy based on the Modernising Government White Paper (Cabinet Office, 1999) acknowledged the demands of the competitive global environment and the need for transformation of public services around the needs of the citizen: “*Electronic service delivery will transform public services to focus on the citizen*” (PIU 2000, p. 17). The strategy discussed the need for collaboration between different agencies, joined-up service delivery and moving away from the traditional service delivery hampered by the existing ‘silos’. Competition was seen as a key element to improve service quality and increasing choice.

Similar commitments had been made throughout the developed world in terms of e-government. The OECD found in 2003 that its member countries’ e-government strategies had adopted a customer focus and addressed the need to collaborate effectively across agencies to create a seamless online service (OECD, 2003). The benchmarking chapter 5 highlights how the e-government agenda converges across

⁷ The criteria were as much about tackling social inclusion and deprivation as transforming service delivery through holistic use of technology (Cabinet Office & DTI 2005, p. 8) Despite Manchester being the anecdotal favourite, Sunderland won the Digital Challenge award in March 2007. Since the launch of the competition the cash prize had shrunk from 10 million to 3 million. A further 1.2 million was put in place for the ten finalists to develop projects around their Digital Strategies on a collaborative basis. Manchester Digital Development Agency are in this ‘DC-10’ group.

Europe.

It appears therefore that the answer to the above question is no, the 'new vision' was not very different from the 'old vision'. The efficiency of public services and a customer-focus are still the overarching principles. In fact, transformational government can be argued to have been conceived already in the first UK e-government strategy back in 1996 when the '*Government Direct*' Green Paper was launched. The core of the e-government vision remains the same; technology should transform government in favour of the citizen and put an end to 'inefficient' bureaucracy. Names, terminology, accountability and leadership appear to have changed around the original vision. An interesting detail about the similarities in the e-government imperative that may seem frivolous but still worthy of a mention is the recurring case scenario used in 1996 as well as in 2006. Colin Muid, one of the authors of *Government Direct* in 1996, reported in an interview that his personal motivation to achieve joined-up government through e-government was driven by his experiences subsequent to the loss of his father and the resulting bureaucratic pandemonium he and his mother had witnessed (The Guardian, 2006). Sir David Varney (author of '*Service Transformation: a Better Service For Citizens and Businesses, a Better Deal for Taxpayers*', HM Treasury, 2006b) also uses bereavement as a case study to highlight the existing disparity and lack of coordination between different public agencies and thus includes bereavement (alongside birth and change of address) in his "blueprint for change" recommendations for setting up a service that would allow citizens to make a single contact with government in any of the three specified circumstances (HM Treasury, 2006b, p. 83).

3.5.4 Measuring performance before and after 2005

Whilst the central tenets of t-government policy were not significantly different from the previous policy, one key policy mechanism did change, namely performance management⁸. Under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) regime local authorities were under considerable reporting strain (Game, 2006; Morphet, 2008). Specifically to do with the local e-government agenda, apart from reporting against the Best Value Performance Indicator 157 as part of the CPA, local authorities

⁸ Centrally controlled performance management targets for local government proliferated under LGMA of New Labour, this is partly why it was claimed that "vertical" joining up increased at the cost of more "horizontal" joining up (Cowell and Martin, 2003, see 3.4)

also had to complete annual IEG statements and report on priority outcomes:

“Under the circumstances of having to comply with IEG and BV 157 regimes, it would come as no surprise if many local authorities were to approach the task with a ‘tick in the box’ approach to service delivery (...). The fundamental question has to be raised whether the range and multiplicity of performance indicators and targets is the best way of achieving the long-term vision” (Hart and Byrne, 2005, p. 8)

The 100% e-enablement target, the chief mission of BVPI 157, as well as IEG statements came to fruition in 2005. The Transformational Government agenda emerged with no specific (technology-focused) targets attached to it. T-government became a tool to deliver a wider agenda predominantly around efficiency, also known as the “Varney Agenda” (after Sir David Varney). The Varney Agenda became an important mechanism for local authorities to comply with the 3 % annual efficiency target over the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 period (HM Treasury, 2007b).

The only national performance indicator (NI 14) around t-government came forth in the Service Transformation Agreement (HM Treasury, 2007a) which made the recommendation that local authorities reduce “avoidable contact” (from customers) by 50% (CLG, 2007). The guidance on NI 14 indicates that reporting would be annual with first reports due in April 2009, therefore councils needed to have mechanisms in place to collect data from October 2008. Where partners in the reformed performance management framework, the Local Area Agreement (LAA), chose NI 14 as a key indicator, a formal target would be agreed locally (IDeA, 2008). By 2009, no Local Strategic Partnership was known to have included NI 14 as a specific target in the LAA⁹, which shows that customer service and transformational government was not a high priority for local authorities and their partners.

Since the change in government in May 2010, the entire performance framework for local authorities has been subject to an overhaul, but the focus of this research remains on the previous administration.

3.5.5 The question of take-up: have-nots and will-nots

According to the ODPM, the average local authority was 97% e-enabled based upon the final IEG returns from all English local authorities in 2005. The ODPM also announced that local authorities had identified £1.1 billion worth of efficiency savings

⁹ The LAA tracker, available at <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/8762092>

through local e-government from 2004 to 2008. However, despite the availability of online services, take-up in the UK remained low (IDABC, 2006).

Consequently, the DCLG launched a £3.4 m Take-up campaign in May 2006. The campaign, aimed at raising the public's awareness of the range of council services available online, was delivered through a variety of national, regional and local media. The campaign was the government's response to particularly disappointing levels of take-up of e-services in the UK. Indeed, Britain came bottom in a Eurostat survey of take-up of e-government services by businesses and below EU average in terms of take-up by individuals (Eurostat, 2005). A DCLG study concluded that 78% of individuals had used the telephone to contact their local authority, compared with 28% face-to-face, 18% by letter, 8% via email and a further 7% using a website (IDeA, 2006).

An independent review of the Take-up campaign commissioned by the DCLG suggested that there were entrenched attitudes towards the use of telephone as the preferred option for citizens to contact local authorities. However, the government remained optimistic that improved electronic services coupled with greater awareness among citizens would ultimately facilitate channel migration from traditional to on-line access (DCLG, 2006b). The government also acknowledged that low take-up was a major barrier to realising efficiency gains from e-government and therefore sought to improve its understanding of citizens' choices when it comes to accessing local authority services. To this end, DCLG commissioned a user volumetrics exercise lead by IDeA esd-toolkit¹⁰ in collaboration with local authorities. The exercise ran from September 2006 to April 2007, the results of which are analysed in chapter 8.

Recent studies argue that the non-internet population in the UK has stagnated at approximately 40%. However, the majority of the non-users reported that they could find a proxy, i.e. they could access the internet if needed through a third party, therefore the proportion of adamant non-users could be as low as 11% (Margetts, 2006). An interesting observation about these "adamant non-users" has been made by Ryder (2007), who found in a UK study of the digital divide and e-government that

¹⁰ Esd-toolkit was the primary website that local authorities had to use for the submission of information to the former ODPM by completing IEG statements online. Consequently, the esd-toolkit website has proved a framework that has now been built upon for communicating information, knowledge and ideas within the wider local authority community.

a proportion of digital have-nots are in fact “*will-nots; those who have but prefer not*” (Ryder, 2007, p. 129). The will-nots are individuals who might readily use ICTs for other purposes, but opt for traditional channels when it comes to citizen-government contact.

The proportion of “will-nots” is potentially large in the UK, given the low demand for e-government; therefore this is identified as one of the key themes in the empirical work reported in chapter 8.

3.6 The promise and problems of e-government

The main policy documents for e-government suggest that the UK government had embraced e-government as a way to ultimately stay competitive in the global marketplace (Cabinet Office, 2005; PIU, 2000, HM Treasury 2006b). The main reasons for this were covered in chapter 2, and it could be summed up as the hegemony of global market capitalism, the forces of which are expressed and accelerated in the ‘space of flows’. However, shiny new technology in government has not always delivered sleek, business like post-bureaucracies and seamless customer services envisioned.

Margetts (2006) was concerned that the quantitative indicators used for measuring e-government performance may have distorted the early development of e-government. Such views are echoed in many accounts criticising the former UK government’s approach to implementing e-government as “*obsessed with targets*” (the Guardian, 2006). Moreover, many high profile public sector IT projects (not limited to the UK) have flopped, creating a sense of stigma that governmental IT project delivery is less than competent (Gauld and Goldfinch, 2006; Margetts, 2006; OECD, 2001b; Capgemini, 2006; PIU, 2000). In the UK specifically, IT expenditure has received ample bad press due to the colossal costs of unpopular high profile schemes, such as the identity card (The Daily Mail, 2009b) or the troubled NHS IT system, the largest single IT investment in the UK worth an estimated 12.4bn which “*has held back the development of IT at a local level, cost billions and is running years behind schedule*” (The BBC, 2009). Indeed local e-government has been thought to have a better reputation than colossal central IT projects.

3.6.1 Citizens as customers of e-government

Many authors have observed that the various components supporting the e-government vision are pertinent to the New Public Management (NPM) doctrine (Brown, 2005; Dunleavy *et al*, 2006; Finger and Pecoud, 2003; Margetts, 2006; Needham, 2004; Reddick, 2009). In tune with NPM thinking, there is a lucrative promise that e-government could deliver more for less, learning from the private sector customer service experience.

A prime example of borrowing private sector customer practices is the adoption of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems in local authorities (King and Cotterill, 2007; Reddick, 2009). In short, CRM is shorthand for a software package that allows a service provider to gather and analyse data on its customers with the intention to create a more personalised customer experience, to increase customer loyalty and to expand the value of the customer relationship (Pan and Lee, 2003). Epitomising the private sector modelling, the Varney Review stated that:

“Focusing on the customer, they [private businesses] develop goods and services based around the customer’s needs, which also meets other corporate requirements. For example, Tesco uses in-depth analysis of Tesco Clubcard data to introduce 12,000 new products each year to its nine million customers”. (HM Treasury, 2006b, pp. 23-24)

However, there is a problematic lack of evidence in terms of what is supposed to be at the heart of e-government: efficiency savings and customer-orientated, joined-up services, improved customer satisfaction and trust in government (King and Cotterill 2007; Kolsaker and Lee-Kelley, 2007).

There is a growing consensus that efficiency savings may not be delivered due to a combination of high investment and maintenance costs, low take-up and difficulties in quantifying service improvements delivered by ICT. A shared services culture appears to have arrived with somewhat mixed blessings as many practitioners report insurmountable problems in trying to move to joined-up service delivery (often backed up by CRM systems) due to significant political, legal, organisational and cultural barriers. Some of these barriers could be related to the technology implementation model discussed at the start of this chapter. To support Campbell’s (1996) analysis about managerial rationalism, an industry survey of a CRM systems provider in the UK confirmed that 83% of 400 managers surveyed said that getting staff to use the software was the biggest challenge, and a further 43% of organisations use less than

half of their CRM system functionality (Sims, 2007). Specific concerns have been reported in relation to the redistribution of power, data ownership and management, security as well as lack of trust, funding, skills and leadership (Beynon-Davies and Martin, 2004; Komito, 2005; Lam, 2005; Lucas, 2003; Margetts, 2006; Moon, 2002; OECD, 2001b).

Arguably e-government promises more than just an extension of NPM. '*Digital Era Governance*' (Dunleavy *et al*, 2006) would signpost a move away from the NPM paradigm. Dunleavy and Margetts (2000, 2006) argue that NPM has had a significant negative impact on citizens' competencies due to the increased policy complexity and privatisation of public services evident in the UK. Digital Era Governance would enhance citizen competencies and create a "*less complex institutional and policy landscape*" (*ibid*, 2006, p. 489). The key ingredients of Digital Era Governance are the reintegration of government functions where NPM sought to disaggregate them, holistic and needs-based structures (linked to "end-to-end" digital services) where joined-up government has failed, and the digitalization of administrative processes to reap productivity gains.

Moreover, Jansen (2006, p. 51), discussing e-government's potential for openness, transparency, accountability and inclusiveness, concluded that "*e-government is far more than realizing NPM*". Indeed there is another side to e-government which could have far greater implications to modern society alongside the efficiency savings and economic gain that are being sought after in the mainstream. Citizen empowerment particularly through Web 2.0 technologies (see chapter 2.5.2) could bring about transformed relationships between the government and citizens, increased transparency and openness, triggering greater participation and reinstating public trust in the authorities (Chadwick, 2006 and 2009; Coleman, 2005). This idea has popular appeal, a column by Jonathan Freedland in the Guardian in May 2007 declared that:

"The internet will revolutionise the very meaning of politics. The web could yet bypass government and existing political communities and either expand democracy in the process – or stifle it." (The Guardian, 2007a).

By the next morning the column had sparked 54 comments online to either support or rebut the central arguments put forward by Freedland in a heated debate, which in itself showed the general public does have an interest in the potential impact of the internet on the business of governance.

Despite the promise of new technologies for political participation and democratic engagement, the next section makes the argument that participatory opportunities for citizens have been largely usurped in government in favour of customer-orientated technologies.

3.6.2 E-democracy and trust deficit

Despite the compelling arguments for e-democracy, authors have observed that the main thrust of e-government practice is focused on a managerial model whereby the purpose of e-government is to resolve inefficiency relating to both speed and cost of public services in the UK (Chadwick and May, 2003), but also in European cities (Torres *et al*, 2006); and in the USA (Tolbert and Mossberger, 2006). West (2004) has demonstrated empirically that whilst the online public sector has the potential to increase citizen trust and confidence in government, it has not done so and public cynicism (in the USA) remained strong about poor performance. Inefficiency is thought to be the main source of public dissatisfaction and citizen engagement through e-democracy has largely fallen by the wayside (Chadwick and May, 2003), while the lack of trust and disengagement continues to be a problem in contemporary liberal democracies, as highlighted in chapter 2.6.

Empirical studies conducted in the USA conclude that the majority of visits to government websites are made in research/informational capacity. A small proportion of citizens use the transactional functions of government websites, and even fewer choose to engage in a participatory process (Streib and Navarro, 2006; Reddick, 2005; Thomas and Streib, 2005). Similar conclusions have been made in Britain, where the take-up of transactional services is among the lowest in Europe; only 7% of Britons had used a website to contact their Council in 2005 (Eurostat, 2005; DCLG, 2006, IDeA, 2006). The transactional and informational functions of government websites worldwide are considered to be the current e-government forte due to the relative successes in these fields (Clayton-Thomas and Streib, 2005).

The results of North American studies suggest that there is a positive link between satisfaction with e-government and increased trust (Welch *et al*, 2004; Tolbert and Mossberger, 2005). Tolbert and Mossberger found that trust appeared to influence how people chose to interact with government, i.e. lack of trust could deter people from engaging in e-government (factors influencing citizen take-up of e-government are discussed in more detail below). Tolbert and Mossberger conclude that improved

interactions through e-government at the local level can result in increased trust in the local authority, however, similar results were not achieved at federal or state level. Thomas and Streib (2005) and Moon (2002) found that governments had made such bad use of the interactive/participatory potential of the internet that the lack of citizen engagement in the political process could be resulting first and foremost from a lack of meaningful opportunities.

In the UK, Needham's (2004) research concluded that in terms of e-government, the e-democracy agenda had not materialised due to financial resources and political commitment being focused on the IEG targets (pre-2005). The lack of any evaluation criteria for local e-democracy, despite e-democracy being one of the three core aims of the National Strategy for Local e-government (ODPM, 2002) supports this view.

Another challenge remains around the definition of return on investment. While considerable funds are invested in e-government projects, their impact on value for money, public value or good governance remains unclear (Baptista, 2005). Many academics argue that the nature of public service makes traditional econometric methods incompatible for measuring the cost-benefit relationship in e-government (Irani *et al*, 2005; Margetts, 2006). Kearns (2004) speculates that e-government could have an impact on trust and any attempt to address this might consider the "*case for drawing e-democracy and e-participation into the e-government and trust debate*" (2004, p. 37).

3.6.3 Factors influencing citizen take-up of e-government

In light of the perceived relationship between local government, trust and e-government, factors influencing citizens' channel choices are deemed important to this research. Combining the theories of Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) and Diffusion of Innovation, Carter and Belanger (2005) show that the factors driving e-government use by citizens are influenced by perceived ease of use, trustworthiness and compatibility.

Ease of use suggests that web interface is easy to navigate and intuitive and effortless to use. Trustworthiness has two constructs; trust of the internet (linked to data security and privacy concerns) and trust of state government (linked to integrity and competence). Compatibility refers to citizens' use of internet and electronic communication for other purposes, such as social, private consumption of work/business purposes, which correlates positively with e-government adoption.

Compatibility was the most significant factor in the study by Carter and Belanger (2005).

Furthermore, Horst *et al* (2007) posit that there are two tiers of trust involved with adoption of e-government, mirroring the findings by Carter and Belanger (2005). Citizens need to trust the integrity and information management capability, or the general competence of government, as well as the information infrastructure. According to Horst *et al* (2007), perceived usefulness of e-government was the main determinant of intention to use e-government, followed by risk perception, personal experience, perceived behavioural control and subjective norm. Horst *et al* (2007) argue that trust in e-government was the key determinant in how useful the services were perceived to be in the first place. In other words, *“perceived usefulness of government e-services appears to be a separate variable that is mainly predicted by trust in e-government”* (p. 1851).

In sum, a two-tiered notion of trust in the technology on the one hand and the service provider on the other play an important role in channel choice. Citizens' channel choices are empirically investigated in chapters 5 (Benchmarking) and 8 (Citizens and Neighbourhoods).

3.7 Chapter summary

During the 'long decade' of New Labour, the general debate and policy agenda around technology have evolved significantly. It can be summarised roughly in three phases:

Since 1997, the newly elected government embarked on a wholesale effort to modernise services, a major part of which was to provide local public services online. This period has been said to have been “obsessed with targets” (The Guardian, 2007), referring to a tight performance management regime controlled by Whitehall.

Post-2005, the Transformational Government strategy linked to the “Varney agenda” (HM Treasury, 2006b) shifted the focus from providing services over the internet to using technology to driving out inefficiencies mainly in the back office.

During and after the recession in 2008, the digital economy became the government's priority, marked by the Digital Britain White Paper and the subsequent Digital

Economy Bill.

The policies of New Labour during the 'long decade' took forward the digital agenda in the belief that e-government is *better government* and that it will help to weed out inefficiencies and boost competitiveness in the global marketplace. The most important imperative for technology implementation in public sector reform was the mounting fiscal pressures reported in the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, and increasingly so since the global recession in 2008. Another important driver for the efficiency agenda have been the perceived 'customer expectations' in the digital age. This is particularly true in the field of e-government which is dominated by the efforts to deliver a more efficient public sector in line with customer expectations in the private sector.

At the same time, the Local Government White Paper (DCLG, 2006a) urged local authorities to engage residents in governance and place-shaping which presupposes an active citizenry. However, theory from the previous chapter 2 suggests that increased deployment of ICTs is likely to contribute towards further spatial inequality and unevenness, which is a troublesome prospect for the place-shaping agenda. Furthermore, the theory of managerial rationalism and re-enforcement politics in local government implies that existing power structures are likely to be repeated and strengthened through e-government projects, which challenges the view of technology as empowering citizens in the local e-government context. The literature also suggests that any normative framework guiding technology implementation under the LGMA was likely to be based around the consumer-citizen, rather than the active citizen.

Broadly coinciding with the global recession, a new direction was signaled with the publication of the Digital Britain White Paper in June 2009 (BIS/DCMS, 2009). Whilst many issues covered in the Digital Britain White Paper can be detected in earlier policies, 2009 is likely to emerge as the year of a sea-change. The indigenous business of government, such as efficiency or 'transformation', is no longer at the heart of the government's technology agenda, the digital economy and related exogenous matters take centre-stage. As a testament to this new focus, the Digital Economy Bill received Royal Assent in April 2010, addressing the economic value of creative and digital industries and copyright issues. In sum, 'digital' is increasingly being associated with the economy.

Nevertheless, internet-based technologies continue to inspire anti-capitalist and

democratising discourse. To sum up, the conceptual framework for this research combines trust, take-up, participation and efficiency in local e-government. The conceptual framework is underpinned by theories of democracy and citizenship as seen in the context of the Network Society. This conceptual framework underpinning the methodology is presented next in chapter 4.

4 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

The logic of the research design and the reasons behind the choice of specific research methods are explained in this chapter. The research aim and objectives are also honed into more penetrative empirical questions.

Chapter 4 is organised in three main sections. Section 4.1 recaps the key themes from chapters 2 and 3 in order to underpin the conceptual framework presented in Figure 3. The research aim and objectives are expanded with more specific research questions arising from the literature. The influence of the social constructivist epistemology on the research design and methods is also explained. Section 4.2 provides a rationale for the research design, a single case study with benchmarking. The case study cities, Manchester and Helsinki, are also introduced. Furthermore, this section offers analysis on the benchmarking as a research method. The chosen mixed-methods approach is introduced in section 4.3 with a perspective on research validity. The practical steps in the fieldwork spanning a period of 20 months from late 2007 to early summer 2009 are described with the sources and methods of data collection and analysis. Here, the three core themes which also reflect the structure of the empirical chapters 6, 7, and 8 are outlined.

4.1.1 Key themes from literature

By way of introduction to the methodology, it is recapped how this research is positioned within the academic literature and policy framework. The research strategy was designed to explore how ICTs are deployed at the local government level to tackle both social and economic challenges. Much of this is to do with (spatial and) social inequality and uneven opportunities for participation in society from the citizen perspective; and from the administrative perspective fiscal pressures and democratic deficit are key. The research aims to explore the proposition that e-government, considered in a broader context of urban governance, could allow the simultaneous empowerment of citizens through inclusive practices (social imperative) as well as help the local authority to be more efficient (economic imperative).

Previous research, such as by Crang *et al* (2006), has shown that within affluent areas residents are better equipped to make use of and benefit from ICTs, a point which reflects the digital divide debate (e.g. Norris, 2001, see 2.4). Studies into ICT-led regeneration in the UK are limited; those that have been done are often sceptical about the long-term benefits. Slack and Williams (2000) argue that community ICT projects only have a marginal benefit to social inclusion programmes in disadvantaged areas. Southern (2002) and Southern and Townsend (2005) scrutinise the role of ICTs in regeneration and argue that the claims about empowerment and the egalitarian character of ICTs are largely unsubstantiated. However, the structural changes in the economy, acutely experienced in Northern English cities and towns, such as in Newcastle (in Crang *et al*, 2006) and in Sunderland (Southern and Townsend, 2005), mean that ICTs are gaining importance in the economic development agenda, as seen in the Digital Britain White Paper (2009) and the subsequent Digital Economy Bill (2010), and other ongoing public sector reform and the future of local government services. The digital agenda would appear to gain relevance rather than lose momentum as digital technologies and internet use become ever more ubiquitous in everyday life.

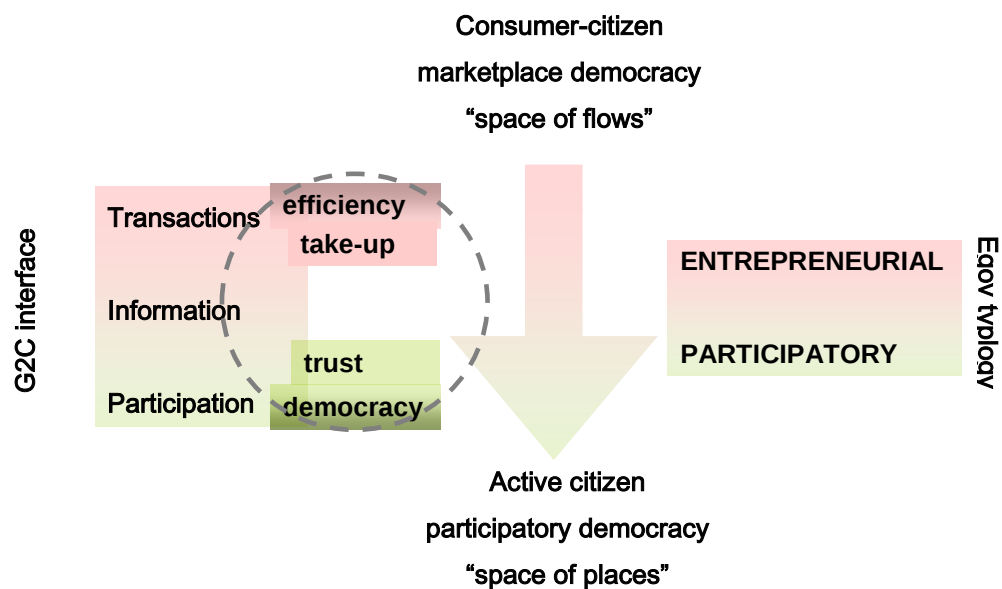
Simultaneously, despite the wide acceptance of e-government as 'better government' in the mainstream, the benefits to service delivery are open to scepticism, particularly in light of the low demand for e-government in the UK, as well as the high cost and low success rate of government IT projects (e.g. Viitanen and Kingston, 2009). Finally, there is a bias towards descriptive accounts in the e-government literature with a lack of theoretical contributions as well as research on the demand (citizen) perspective; gaps this research aims to fill.

4.1.2 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework brings together the key points from the theory of the Network Society and ideas about e-government and how the implementation of technology agendas in local government impact upon citizenship and governance.

In Figure 3 overleaf, the 'space of flows' represents global capital and the associated structural changes in the economy linked to the idea of the 'consumer-citizen' and the 'marketplace democracy'. From a governance perspective, Bang and Esmark (2008, 2009) described how in the Network Society, the merits of the public domain are increasingly judged by 'consumer-citizens' according to the 'efficiency' of public action rather than the moral worth or trustworthiness of government. Local government therefore increasingly turns to the private sector to provide 'efficient' solutions, which results in a disconnection between the electorate and what could be termed public consumption. Furthermore, the private sector and global capital are seen as instrumental to the achievement of competitiveness and economic growth in the global marketplace; this is linked to neoliberalisation whereby the primary purpose of governance is to deliver economic competitiveness (Cochrane, 2007). The theory of the Network Society suggests that communities become more atomised as the worth of collective action subsides and citizens and well as governments are more driven by private consumption. In terms of e-government implementation, such values lead towards transaction-driven electronic services which have been described as entrepreneurial by Tolbert and Mossberger (2006) (see chapter 3.3.1). Under an entrepreneurial model of local e-government, the 'problem' with the relationship between the electorate and e-government is one of low take-up (or demand) for such services by citizens, lagging efficiency/savings targets, project failures and the perception of 'waste of money' as regards resources expended into local e-government.

Figure 3: Conceptual framework



The bottom half of Figure 3 represents the 'space of places' and participatory values in democratic governance. Governance in the Network Society has the potential to result in more reflexive and communicative relationships between the state, citizens and other stakeholders, such as the third and private sector (Bang and Esmark, 2008). More place-based governance practices (Healey, 1999) could provide a basis for the active inclusion of citizens and the multiple place identities and relationships which characterise the 'space of places' in the Network Society. The 'problem' and therefore the motivation for public action then becomes the democratic deficit and governance should seek to connect citizens with collective or public mechanisms of participation and consumption. Such governance practices should seek to reduce inequalities and spatial unevenness, and reconnect local places which have 'low value' in the language of networked global capital. E-government should therefore be driven by participatory values whereby trust and democratic principles of governance emphasise inclusion and empowerment through democratic means rather than through consumerism and/or global competitiveness.

This conceptual framework puts forward the proposition that in a democratic society where public trust towards government is higher, the efficiency targets in a fiscally constrained environment could also be more realistic as take-up of automated e-channels could increase. This is represented in Figure 3 with the dotted line suggesting that a 'virtuous circle' between trust and participatory approaches to e-government could contribute to higher take-up of e-government and therefore also increased efficiency. The situation can also be reversed in a 'vicious circle', which

characterises the current situation whereby e-government is front-loaded with high expectations of efficiency, however, in reality local e-government programmes are met with low citizen demand, lack of trust, and multiple barriers in their implementation.

4.1.3 Aim, objectives and key research questions

The logic of the research is encapsulated in the following aim, objectives and key empirical questions. Included also are the central themes arising out of the literature review in previous chapters 2 and 3 (against shaded background under each objective).

The assumption, based on the literature review, the theory of the Network Society and the critique of entrepreneurial urbanism, is that there is an underlying economic orthodoxy to ICT deployments in the city which is prone to short-circuiting democratic-participatory processes. This bias is likely to contribute to more, rather than less, inequality and unevenness in the urban environment. These assumptions are not hypotheses, as this research is not situated in a positivist epistemology or using a reductionist logic to explain correlations or dependencies. Rather, they present the central theoretical (and in some cases empirical) propositions which are explored and made observations about in a real life context in the case study. Based on the literature review, they guide the development of the more penetrating empirical questions which are honed from the more general research objectives (Yin, 1994).

Aim

The overall aim of the research is to examine the balance between the economic and social imperatives of technology development in the electronically networked city, through the lens of citizenship. With reference to the theory of the Network Society, the role of local government is investigated vis-à-vis citizens.

Objective 1: To examine local government ICT strategies and how they link with wider urban governance.

Despite its potential for democratic empowerment and social inclusion, ICTs exacerbate spatial inequality and unevenness due to the economic orthodoxy in ICTs policies and the emergent digital economy.

- 1.1 How are social justice, spatial inequality, and economic development represented and prioritised in ICT strategies for the city/region?
- 1.2 How do urban governance strategies address ICTs and the digital society/economy?

Objective 2: To explore how city services are delivered to, and accessed by, citizens in a local e-government environment.

The efficiency agenda drives e-government on the supply side. Demand is mainly for informational purposes (less so for transactions or participation). Take-up of e-government is low in the UK, particularly so within disadvantaged groups, as well as older population.

- 2.1 What are the core pillars of the city council's e-government/service improvement strategy? (supply)
- 2.2 What is the take-up of e-government nationally and locally?
- 2.3 What is e-government used for by citizens?
- 2.4 What influences citizens' channel choices locally (demand)?

Objective 3: To undertake a benchmarking study (of objectives 1 and 2) in a European context.

E-government indicators show a difference between EU countries, Nordic countries traditionally being high on take-up as well as 'e-government sophistication'.

- 3.1 What socially constructed factors might influence information society performance in Helsinki (high performing context)?
- 3.2 What are the ICT policies like vis-à-vis the citizens?
- 3.3 What are the differences in citizens' opinions and attitudes influencing channel choices?

Objective 4: To establish the extent to which e-government mechanisms are successful in delivering the economic and social ‘twin aims’ of technology relating to service improvement and enabling local participation and empowerment.

E-government, considered in a broader context of governance, could allow the simultaneous empowerment of citizens through inclusive practices (*social imperative*) as well as help the local authority to be more efficient (*economic imperative*). E-government is reportedly biased towards efficiency-driven “top-down” practices; there is a lack of investment and initiatives in the e-democracy domain. The citizen is viewed as a customer - yet the evidence even for efficiency gains remains inconclusive. Micro trends specifically in the Web 2.0 field suggest that participation could change ‘old’ power dynamics.

4.1 What demonstrable achievements have been made with the help of technology in achieving citizen-centric, efficient, and inclusive services?

4.2 Are there examples of empowerment and local participation facilitated with online technology?

Objective 5: To make policy recommendations emanating from the case study and the benchmarking exercise.

A shift towards “digital economy” in e-government policy coincided with the global recession in 2008. Digital development is ever more enshrined in the language of the economy.

5.1 How could local authorities steer technology to prevent further digital divide which more widely reflects social and economic inequalities?

5.2 Are there transferable policy concepts from the benchmark?

5.3 How does the changing political climate influence urban service delivery?

4.1.4 Epistemology - socially constructed knowledge

As implied earlier, the theory of the Network Society encourages a social-constructivist epistemology. Socially constructed knowledge implies a shared process between actors. The chosen epistemology also gives a methodological steer for the research design and supports the case study approach.

As a starting point, the Kuhnian perspective is that knowledge is “*intrinsically the common property of a group or else nothing at all*” (Kuhn, 1970, p. 210). For the research design, a social-constructivist epistemology suggests that learning and understanding of the phenomena being studied can be only be gained through the researcher being placed within the (social) context of the study. As Giddens (1982, cited in Flyvbjerg, 2006) posits:

“I have accepted that it is right to say that the condition of generating descriptions of social activity is being able in principle to participate in it. It involves “mutual knowledge”, shared by the observer and participants whose action constitutes and reconstitutes the social world” (p. 236)

Finally, the social construction of technology, also endorsed by Castells, and others (Campbell, 1996; Jorgensen and Klay, 2007), takes the view that human agency influences technological development. A classic account in this field was published by Bijker *et al* (1987) refuting technological determinism. According to technological determinism, social systems organise themselves to support technological development. By contrast, social construction of technology implies a certain path-dependency in terms of technological development and the socio-political context within which it takes place. According Bijker *et al* (1987), social groups also determine the problems of technological development, as well as potential solutions, emphasising the flexibility of interpretation by different groups.

Furthermore, Jorgensen and Clay (2007) argue that technology mirrors the society, reflecting the values of those who are in a position of power. Kling and Kraemer assert that a “reinforcement politics” emerge under managerial rationalist assumptions in local government, where technology serves “*whatever social forces are dominant in organizational settings*” (1982, p. 195). Campbell (1996) demonstrates how social interactionism, emphasising the social construction of technology, helps to understand the tensions and complexities of technology implementation.

The constructivist approach and the theory of the Network Society (which itself is built on a collection of empirical case studies) supports the case study approach. Discussing case studies in social science, Flyvbjerg (2006, p. 219) defends the Kuhnian perspective that a scientific discipline without a large body of case studies is “a discipline without systematic production of exemplars, and a discipline without exemplars in an ineffective one”. Therefore, given the theoretical and epistemological framework, the argument is made here that the case study is a justified approach to gain empirical insights, adding to the body of literature in this field of research.

4.2 Research design

4.2.1 Case study with benchmarking

The research construct consists of a single case study of the city of Manchester, with two-tiered benchmarking in the European context; first with quantitative metrics-style benchmarking against European comparators, second a qualitative case study in the city of Helsinki.

According to Yin (2003), case studies are appropriate when the subject and the context of the research become equally important to the understanding of the nature of the phenomena being studied:

“Case study continues to be an essential form of social science inquiry. The method is appropriate when researcher either desire or are forced by circumstances (a) to define research topics broadly and not narrowly, (b) to cover contextual or complex multivariate conditions and not just isolated variables, and (c) to rely on multiple and not singular sources of evidence.”
(Yin, 2003, xi)

Furthermore, Yin (2003) posits that case studies have long been one of the most common methods of conducting public policy relevant research. This is true in this research which focuses on urban governance and citizens within the ICT policy framework. Moreover, a social constructivist epistemology encourages a full appreciation of the (social) context within which the phenomena are being studied, i.e. the case environment. According to Titscher *et al* (2000) the term case refers to a research strategy rather than a method. The strategy is formed to investigate particular phenomena in their real context, often deploying multiple methods, as is the case in this research. Here, the case study strategy helps to focus on a ‘real context’

and a meaningful geography for researching the electronically networked city.

Manchester, the locus the main case study, has many facets and on the one hand can be viewed as a typical, or broadly representative case study in the context of the implementation of the Transformational Government agenda in English local government. This is because the policy agenda driven by Whitehall during New Labour years was top down and prescriptive towards local government, and allowed little flexibility of local interpretation about the policy objectives: Customer Relationship Management technology, contact centres, electronic service delivery and efficiency targets. On the other hand however, Manchester is an outlier or an extreme case in the field of 'entrepreneurial urbanism' or 'boosterism' and the governance practices in urban development dubbed as the 'Manchester model' (Robson, 2002). Equally, Manchester's early ambitions and reputation as a pioneer in 'digital development' linked to urban regeneration makes the city an extreme case study in the context of England (Graham and Dominy, 1992).

Helsinki was chosen as a benchmark after initial research findings in Manchester confirmed a low citizen demand for e-government, mirroring the national picture in England. The overarching principle therefore was to choose a benchmark where citizens use e-government actively. This reflects Yin's (2003, p. 10) notion of choosing "*exemplary instances of the phenomenon being studied*" in the main case study.

The cities of Manchester as well as Helsinki have been subject to previous studies about the nature and positioning of the cities in the knowledge economy. Chapter 6 provides a fuller account of Manchester, whereas chapter 5 describes the benchmarking context. For the purpose of the research design and methodology, one typology of European cities developed by van Winden *et al* (2007) is offered in order to locate the two cities in the wider context of industrial restructuring and the knowledge economy. The typology is preliminary by its own admission and perhaps provocative, but it is used here to illustrate the kind of competitive-comparative frameworks within which European urban policy makers operate.

Van Winden *et al* cast Manchester among "metropolises in transition" (together with Rotterdam and Dortmund). Typically to such metropolitan areas, Manchester experiences continued socio-economic problems rooted in the economic legacy of a declined manufacturing industry whilst combatting negative perceptions about the

environment, housing and crime. Manchester, however, is an early adopter in pursuing integrated economic development policies and physical regeneration driven by an acute awareness of the demands of the structural transition towards the knowledge economy. This research is interested in neighbourhoods which suffer from long-term socio-economic disadvantage, widely perceived to be on the 'wrong side' of the digital divide, which is why Manchester provides a good case study location. Such areas are arguably also more needy in terms of local authority intervention and public services.

By contrast, Finland is widely recognised to be in the global vanguard in terms of e-society indicators, and particularly high in the take-up of e-government (EC, 2009a). The Nordic countries have traditionally occupied a high position in international league tables on e-government (e.g. Accenture 2006). In 2007, results from a pan-European benchmarking study (EC/eGovernment Unit, 2007) re-enforced the message by arguing that the highest performing e-government services are found in Scandinavia where also citizen trust and government transparency score highly. Furthermore, a recent study on government reform heralds Finland as an example of best practice in joined-up government – a central topic in the UK Transformational Government agenda (see 3.5.3) (Lodge and Kalitowski, 2007).

Apart from the international league tables on e-government or e-society discussed above, the typology by van Winden *et al* (2007) identifies Helsinki as a “knowledge economy star” (alongside Amsterdam and Munich), scoring highly on all of the knowledge economy indicators included in the study (knowledge base, industrial structure, quality of life image, accessibility, diversity, scale, social equity, development of human capital and knowledge-based industries).

In terms of scale, Helsinki is the only city-region in Finland comparable to Manchester in terms of population size and urban complexity. Table 5 below offers a snapshot of key statistics. Apart from population at the city-regional scale which is considerably greater in Manchester; otherwise the two cities are comparable.

Table 4: Comparative information about Manchester and Helsinki

City	population	land area (hectares)	people per hectare	population in the City-Region	no of LAs in the City-Region
Manchester	441,200	115,656	38	2,482,328	10
Helsinki	564,521	186,000	30	1,288,781	14

(Source: Manchester City Council 2007 and City of Helsinki 2007)

Whilst from a perspective of scale and size, Manchester and Helsinki are comparable, Finland offers an entirely different legal, and administrative-cultural framework embedded in the Nordic tradition of openness, consensus-seeking political environment, and a strong, independent municipal sector. Arguments for and against international comparisons have been put forward in the academy. A discussion of the benefits and limitations of benchmarking is provided in section 4.2.5 below.

Furthermore, on a practical level, there is an active link between Helsinki and Manchester in e-government policy exchange. Helsinki's strong emphasis on citizen participation has earned the city a reputation for good practice. Furthermore, a contextual link of partnership and collaboration exists between the two cities as they continue to collaborate through European projects in the field of e-government. Examples of shared/partnership projects are FP6-funded IntelCities and URBACT Information Society Thematic Network, both funded through the EU, and more recently the SMARTiP programme (2010-2013).

Chronologically, the benchmarking fieldwork in Helsinki was undertaken in May-June 2008. The benchmarking exercise was therefore 'sandwiched' in between the main case study research in Manchester. The research timeline is presented in Table 4.

Table 5: The research timeline

Research task	2007	2008	2009
Desktop/ICT policies			
Indicators, volumetrics			
Scoping interviews Mcr			
Helsinki/ benchmarking interviews & focus group			
Statistics Mcr			
Interviews Mcr			
Focus groups Mcr			

4.2.2 The single case study

As a starting point it is important to bear in mind that a single case study is not a sample of one. There are, nevertheless, widely known generic criticisms associated with the single case approach. These include a sense of “*false security that the researcher knows everything*” about the area of research. Other limitations of the case study methods have been described as the “*comparability, representativity and generalizability*” of the results (Titscher *et al*, 2000, pp. 43-44). Because case studies do not pertain to the rules of random sampling and concerns to do with population validity in the positivist tradition, Yin (1994) argues that the results of a case study are generalisable to the theoretical propositions that are under investigation, its aim is not to make inference to a wider population.

Flyvbjerg (2006) engages in an insightful debate about what he terms “conventional wisdom” according to which case studies are seen as unscientific within social sciences, a view supported by those who prefer the hypothetico-deductive model of explanation. The nature of knowledge, according to a social-constructivist epistemology, requires shared experiences and learning on behalf of the researcher. Research is therefore viewed as an iterative process, embedded in empirical enquiry as Flyvbjerg posits:

“Human behaviour cannot be meaningfully understood as simply the rule-governed acts found at the lowest levels of the learning process in much theory” (ibid, p. 223)

Concrete experiences achieved through proximity to the studied reality are central to the learning process, or the iterative, circular chain of enquiry and feedback required as part of a reflexive research practice. Thus the main argument for the single case study pertains to the social construction of knowledge and the benefits of the proximity of the researcher to the studied reality in a reflexive research practice.

Furthermore, Flyvbjerg (2006) challenges the idea that predictive theory is meaningful at all in social science. Predictive theory is seen as context-independent universal theory, as opposed to context-dependent knowledge generated through an inductive approach. Flyvbjerg sees context-dependent knowledge as the true form of expert knowledge. This reflects the logic of the doctoral research process, starting with theory and literature-based generalisations in chapters 2 and 3 moving to the specific context of the empirical enquiry in chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 where the experientially embedded insights and interpretation are generated and developed in the discussion chapter 9.

4.2.3 Benchmarking as a method

A definition of both 'benchmarking' and 'benchmark' is adapted from Yasin (2002). Here, benchmarking is understood as the systematic learning from recognised 'best practices' (=benchmark), linked to the notion of improving current practices. The majority of published academic papers in the field of benchmarking and 'best practice' are largely based on case studies (Longbottom, 2000). Translated to the language of case study methodology, 'best practice' refers to an extreme or critical case construct (Bryman, 2005), or exemplary practice (Yin, 2003). Indeed, the term 'best practice' is imbued with normative assumptions which are deemed problematic in an academic enquiry. Therefore, the use of 'best practice' was avoided throughout the research process, in favour of the term 'good practice' and the more generic term 'benchmark'.

There are two types of benchmarking which are relevant to this study; metrics style quantitative benchmarking related to performance indicators, and qualitative benchmarking aiming at a more holistic understanding of the context. Metrics style comparative benchmarking has broad appeal in contemporary policy. According to Longbottom (2000), it focuses on performance related outputs, cost or financial performance quantified into easily comparable indicators. The pitfall in metrics-style benchmarking is an over-reliance on performance measurement overlooking

contextual relevance factors.

In the knowledge economy, it is useful to note that competitiveness indices or league tables between European (and 'world') cities have become ubiquitous, owing much to the metrics style benchmarking carried out at supranational level by established institutions such as the EU and OECD, but also by private consultancies (e.g. Cushman Wakefield/ Competitive Cities report), universities (e.g. Centre for International Competitiveness at the University of Wales Institute/ WKCI); and think-tanks/third sector organisations, such as the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Competitiveness Report and the Global Information Technology Report. These indices are reviewed at the start of chapter 5.

Benchmarking has mainstreamed in the world of business management and is maturing in the field of public policy, too, linked to the globalisation of the economy, and on the burgeoning strategic management techniques and quality management in organisations (Davies, 1998; Longbottom, 2000; Yasin, 2002). In terms of British Local Government, Davies (1998) detects an increase in benchmarking associated with the rise of performance management culture (see 3.5.4). Local Government, with challenging targets to meet but limited resources, turned to the benchmarking of best practices to achieve accelerated learning.

The particular challenges of strategic benchmarking are rooted in the "*uniquely contingent nature of strategy formulation and implementation*" and the fact that "*local authorities are heterogenous and diverse*" (Davies, 1998, p. 264). However, it is acknowledged that there is a high degree of informal copying and networking between local government professionals, suggesting that practitioners routinely embark on casual process benchmarking. Davies posits that, despite the challenges of strategic benchmarking and the inconclusive evidence of public value being gained through it, there is great scope for "learning by looking" in strategic benchmarking in public policy (*ibid*). This is because strategic benchmarking can facilitate "unlearning"; a process of questioning the implicit assumptions in current policy. Existing or preconceived ideas about the organisation or its operating environment tend to inhibit organisational learning; therefore the unlearning of these assumptions is promoted within the learning organisation tradition (Senge *et al*, 1994, quoted in Davies, 1998, p. 264). Furthermore, in British Local Government, "industry recipes" have proliferated as a result of a tightly defined performance regime under which "*a convergence towards the means of the national performance bands*" occurs (*ibid*). Therefore, questioning

these “industry recipes” by looking at alternatives merits the international benchmarking approach in this research.

In summary, the benchmarking case study in Helsinki was an in-depth qualitative research process focusing on strategy rather than process. It had three principal objectives as follows:

1. To explore the research questions in a contrasting extreme/critical case scenario pertaining to the idea of good practice;
2. To assist in critical thinking in the main case study (“unlearning” or challenging “industry recipes”);
3. To enrich and inform policy recommendations (either through the process of unlearning or policy transfer).

It is argued that international policy comparisons are useful for as long as the contextual relevance is acknowledged and carefully considered before any recommendation is made.

Figure 4 illustrates the case study construct and the mixed methods approach, which is discussed further in the following section 4.3

Figure 4: The case study construct with benchmark

(Quantitative methods above the dotted line, qualitative methods below)



4.3 Methods

4.3.1 Validity in mixed methods research

Bryman (2007) posits that there are three methodological traditions; qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. In light of this, Bryman calls for more attention to be paid on the research questions and choice of appropriate methods pertaining to the research questions. Indeed it is widely accepted in textbooks of social research that the research questions should inform the choice of methods (Bryman, 2005; Sapsford and Jupp, 1996). However, Bryman (2005) has found that all too often published research failed to establish a link between the research questions and the research design in the use of mixed methods. On the other end of the spectrum, some accounts of research methods neatly tailored around the research questions can be too “sanitized” (*ibid*, 2007, p. 17).

It is acknowledged that the iterative case study demands a degree of flexibility from the research design. In the course of the fieldwork, many dead ends were encountered, interviewees refusing to be cooperate, and truly unexpected discoveries made, such as the lack of corporate CRM systems and ‘one stop shops’ in Helsinki . In social research, the research design needs to offer a robust framework to guide the fieldwork, the aim and objectives as well as the research themes served that purpose, whilst retaining flexibility to allow the iterative learning process to take place.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods attract a certain amount of prejudice against them as offering valid, objective claims to what is true. Perhaps due to this ambivalence and preferences in each tradition, Bryman (2005, p. 5) reports that there is a “universalistic discourse” in social research which sees mixed methods as superior to single method studies. The interpretive tradition immersed in qualitative research is often criticised of allowing too much scope for selective interpretation, resulting in a confirmation of what was thought to be right from the outset. Similar criticism is often aimed at case studies as a research design (Flyvbjerg, 2007). Those favouring the hypothetico-deductive tradition argue that quantitative studies have more predictive power, objectivity and external validity. On the other hand, statistical approaches are criticised for lacking interpretive power and explanation which is necessary for a holistic understanding of contextual factors.

In light of recent public debate about the revelations in climate science, the popular view of quantitative research as more authoritative or scientific has been brought to question. In November 2009, a series of leaked emails gained by hackers from the email server of the University of East Anglia resulted in a media frenzy on the eve of the Copenhagen climate change summit. The popular press ran headlines such as “*Climate change: this is the worst scientific scandal of our generation*” (The Daily Telegraph, 2009). Scientists at the Climate Research Unit were accused of manipulating data sets, or “massaging statistics”, in order to reach the desired outcomes, whilst the validity of the actual data which had been gathered from weather stations world-wide was also questioned, since the raw data could no longer be retrieved (The Times, 2009a).

This extreme example demonstrates that statistical evidence cannot be used to validate or to make research findings more convincing *per se*; probity concerns apply to both quantitative and qualitative research. On the other hand, well-designed ethical research, be it in either tradition, should arrive at valid conclusions without further props from a different methodological discipline (Sapford and Jupp, 1996).

Reflexivity and triangulation are often used by researchers to assess the validity of research; both are employed in this research process. The former requires a continual appraisal of the context in which data is collected and the role of the researcher in that process. The latter seeks to confirm the validity of observation through cross-checking with other sources of data; but it does not necessitate the use of methods from a different discipline (Sapsford and Jupp 1996). In this research process, the mixing of qualitative and quantitative methods is designed to answer specific research questions, some of which can best be answered through research into volumes (take-up of electronic channels, internet penetration, socio-economic divides), others through conversation or interaction with people (behaviour, trust, reasons behind policy decisions etc.). Thus the mixed methods approach adds construct validity to the research. The research questions inform the methodological choices to ensure that what is being measured or observed is in line with what the study intends to uncover and what conclusions can validly be drawn.

4.3.2 Research instruments

The sources of evidence in this research are typical to case studies involving cities and public policy. The documentary sources included policies, committee reports,

research/evaluation/audit reports, (third party) emails and press clippings, as well as published academic studies. The interactive methods included interviews, focus groups, emails (between the researcher and subjects) and direct participant observation at meetings in the neighbourhoods. All quantitative analysis was secondary; the sources included public administrative data (channel volumetrics) as well as survey research data (Best Value Survey) and international metrics-type benchmarking indicators. A full description of the methods and sources is provided in 4.3.3 (quantitative) and 4.3.4 (qualitative) below.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) argue that all social research involves participant observation; furthermore, a social-constructivist epistemology implies that the researcher is in close contact with the studied reality. In interpretive qualitative research the researcher is fundamentally involved in the process of making sense of the large volume of data generated (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994). According to these principles, the data collection was continually guided through observations about relevance. During the fieldwork many questions were encountered, some indicative of particular political sensitivities (such as interviewees refusing to be interviewed), other avenues simply turning out to generate vast amounts of largely irrelevant data (such as City Council website metrics – the volumes of hits on the website did not illustrate anything of relevance to this research).

A comprehensive account of the data sources that were included in the analysis provided in chapters 5-8 is provided below.

4.3.3 Quantitative methods

Quantitative methods were deployed at three different scales; international, national and sub-regional/local.

a) International benchmark data (Eurostat, OECD, WKCI, WEF)

The international benchmarking shows how the UK compares in different areas of e-society and e-government league tables with a focus on the European Union's Lisbon Agenda and the associated Information Society indicators. It aimed to answer specific questions about broadband penetration, affordability of connectivity, internet vs. e-government use by citizens, as well as the perceived 'knowledge competitiveness' of different locations.

b) National (UK): Take-up study (IDeA/esd-toolkit)

The IDeA volumetrics study was commissioned by DCLG in the wake of the 2005 Implementing Electronic Government targets. Despite near 100% “e-enablement” of local government services, the DCLG-commissioned study had found “entrenched attitudes” towards using the telephone when accessing local government services (see 3.3.5). The national Take-up study monitored actual volumes of citizen contacts in participating local authorities over three channels; internet, telephone and face-to-face.

The secondary analysis of the take-up data included converting the original Excel spreadsheets into SPSS for better analysis. Due to the disparate nature of the data which was based on voluntary contributions from local authorities reflecting each authority’s capacity to monitor and record customer contacts, considerable data cleansing was required to make the information comparable and meaningful. Appendix 1 provides more background on how the data was appraised before the final analysis presented in chapter 8.

The final dataset of the Take-up study provided for an analysis based on the following five typical local authority environmental services:

- 1) Fly tipping (the illegal dumping of waste on public or privately owned land);
- 2) Street lighting;
- 3) Abandoned vehicles;
- 4) Missed bin collections; and
- 5) Bulky waste (waste that is too large to dispose of in the standard bins provided by the local authority, its collection must be requested separately).

The study also allowed for differentiating between two different types of customer contact; applications for service and provision of information, which relate to two of the three-pronged e-government typology (transactional and informational) introduced in 3.3.1 and again the conceptual framework (see Figure 3 in 4.1.2).

c) Local: Manchester City Council

Manchester had not taken part in the national Take-up study described above, therefore the first task was to identify suitable data sources to illustrate the volumes

and preferences of customer contact in Manchester.

The following sources were identified through interviews with officers of the City Council:

- Manchester City Council's Best Value Survey 2006-07
- Environment on-Call channel data (January-March 2008, 2009, and 2010)
- MORI Customer Contact Survey, Manchester City Council (November 2008)

The City Council's Best Value Survey is a large annual survey of residents that was already recorded in SPSS. The secondary analysis of this data aimed to find patterns between the dependent variable (channel choice: face-to-face, telephone, internet) and the independent variables including a variety of respondent characteristics (e.g. age, housing tenure), purpose of contact and perceptions of the Council, including trustworthiness.

The other two Manchester quantitative sources were used for illustrative or explanatory purposes as deemed appropriate.

4.3.4 Qualitative methods

As mentioned above, the qualitative sources were typical of case studies of local government, including document analysis, semi-structured interviews with local authority officers, elected members and active citizens, and neighbourhood focus groups (with a pilot survey).

a) Documents

Analysis of written documents was conducted to a large extent prior to the interviews. The main documents included the formally adopted ICT policies, committee reports and minutes of meetings. The documentary analysis served two main objectives; to identify key concepts and terms to be further explored in the interviews about, as well as to seek verification, or conversely, falsification, of the trends assumed to be found in the case study area on the basis of the literature review. Apart from non-personal communications, referring to documents authored usually in a professional capacity such as policies, committee reports or research reports, personal communications between individuals, mainly emails, are included in the documentary analysis.

b) Interviews

The selection of interviewees was based on the snowballing method, starting with a limited number of scoping interviews with key officers from Manchester City Council; the same principle was applied in the Helsinki benchmarking case. The interviews were mostly semi-structured, each lasting between 45 and 90 minutes. During some interviews particularly with highly knowledgeable interviewees, it became obvious that pre-determined questions should be set aside in favour of an unstructured conversation to optimise the learning potential. An idiosyncratic approach to each interview in the social-constructivist tradition meant that the ability to replicate the interview was not a cause for concern. Digital voice recording also helped to capture the unstructured interviews as easily as the semi-structured ones. As Sapsford and Jupp (1996, p. 117) posit *“the opposition between structured and unstructured methods of data collection is in many ways a false one”*; even unstructured asking of questions still contains some structure dictated by the researcher. In research interviews, *“every reply is an artefact produced by the particular interviewer’s interaction with a specific respondent in a given context”* (ibid, p. 117).

In total, 30 individuals were interviewed in Manchester (listed in Table 6), many of whom were interviewed more than once in the course of the fieldwork in 2008-09. The quotations from the interviewees are anonymised in order to retain confidentiality.

The three core themes explored in these interviews are set out in Table 8 overleaf, as well as how the themes were divided between the empirical chapters. In short, the balance between efficiency savings, service improvement and citizen engagement was explored, as well as programme-specific aims and barriers, such as with the ambition to provide a municipal digital infrastructure.

Table 6: Manchester interviews

M1	MDDA ¹¹ , Head
M2	MIP ¹² , Director
M3	MIP, Head of Delivery
M4	Manchester Libraries, Head
M5	MDDA, team leader 1
M6	MIP, Senior Project Manager (website, pest control)
M7	MIP, Assistant Director
M8	MIP, Senior Project Manager (Contact Centre Project)
M9	Community Engagement Development Officer
M10	Senior Regeneration Officer, Wythenshawe
M11	EoC Operations, MIP
M12	ICT coordinator, South MCR Regeneration
M13	Ward Coordinator
M14	Ward Support Officer
M15	Website manager
M16	Lifelong learning W'shawe
M17	Lifelong learning, Longsight & Levenshulme
M18	Lifelong learning W'shawe
M19	MDDA, Principal Officer
M19	Head of Research & Intelligence, MCC
M20	MDDA, officer
M21	Manchester digital stakeholder 1
M22	Manchester digital stakeholder 2
M23	Elected member, back bencher
M24	Elected member, cabinet
M25	Resident and community activist 1 Levenshulme
M26	Resident and community activist 2 Levenshulme
M27	Volunteer 1, Benchill community centre (W'shawe)
M28	Volunteer 2, Benchill community centre (W'shawe)
M29	Planning officer, Greater Manchester
M30	EoC Call Centre Operative

¹¹ Manchester Digital Development Agency, ESRC CASE partner to this research

¹² Manchester Improvement Programme

c) Focus groups

Local residents were engaged in focus groups entitled “What makes you click” to discuss their priorities, expectations and experiences of using the internet in general and e-government specifically. The e-government typology of user-initiated contact after Tolbert and Mossberger 2006 (see Table 2: ***A typology of citizen-initiated e-government interaction***), differentiating between informational, transactional and participatory uses guided the focus groups. The recruitment of volunteers to the focus groups was conducted locally in the community venues where the focus groups were intended to take place. They were as follows:

- 1) Kontula community centre (Helsinki benchmarking study)
- 2) Wythenshawe Forum (library)
- 3) Levenshulme library

The focus groups were advertised on the notice boards at the community venues, emails were sent to all known local residents groups via the City Council in both Manchester neighbourhoods, in Helsinki an electronic notice was posted on an online forum. The most fruitful recruitment method, however, was the researcher's attendance at community events held at local venues and approaching individuals in person with a flier about the research (see Figure 5). The aim was to ensure that a wide range of internet skills would be represented at each focus group, ranging from no or little experience of using the internet to more confident users. In Wythenshawe, attendance at the Benchill community centre resulted in an interview at the local community radio station to discuss the research project and to advertise the focus group on air.

Prior to the focus group, a concise pilot survey was conducted in each of the community venues to gauge residents' views, to ensure that the questions and categories were relevant and understood by the public prior to the in-depth discussions in the focus groups. A full quantitative survey was not considered desirable or feasible in terms of uncovering the bottom-up opinions of citizens. There are two main arguments for adopting a qualitative approach at the neighbourhood level. Firstly, in accordance with the social-constructivist framework and the principle of interpretive flexibility in the social construction of technology, it was considered appropriate to allow more interaction between the researcher and the participants during the process of data generation than would be possible via predetermined

questionnaires. Secondly, as random sampling would not be feasible given the available time and resources, the lack of power of interpretation resulting from convenience sampling would undermine any efforts to quantify this part of the study.

Furthermore, the focus groups addressed the digital divide by allowing for a diverse voice to be heard. It would be unlikely that a person with little or no experience of the internet would self-select to fill in a questionnaire about internet use. This is particularly important as e-government has been criticised for being predominantly accessed by white, educated, younger and economically active population therefore serving the interests of the 'economic elites' (Ho, 2002; Tolbert and Mossberger, 2006; Thomas and Streib, 2005). The flyer produced for the Levenshulme focus group is in Figure 5 below, similar flyers were produced in Wythenshawe and Helsinki (in Finnish).

Figure 5: Focus Group flyer “What makes you click?”



The discussion is facilitated by Jenni Viitanen, a local resident and researcher at the University of Manchester. This project deals with people's choices and preferences when using services and finding information, whether on the internet, telephone or face-to-face. You need not be an expert, just willing to talk about your everyday experiences. The meeting will take about 1.5 hours, at the end of which free lunch is provided for everyone.

Contact:
jenni.viitanen@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

In partnership with:  MDDA
Manchester Digital Development Agency

4.3.5 Research instruments in the benchmarking study

The benchmarking case study included largely the same qualitative methods as the main case study; documentary analysis, interviews and a focus group with a pilot survey. The main element missing in the benchmarking case study is the statistical analysis exploring essentially the digital divide and the profiles of citizens who use

local e-government in Manchester. It became evident that the online channel is the most popular channel among the majority of the population in Helsinki. It was deemed more fruitful to focus on understanding citizens' perceptions and experiences using qualitative methods on the one hand, and the aspirations and policy drivers of the supply side on the other.

As in the main case study, the interviewees in Helsinki were selected using a snowballing method; three experts (two in the City Council, one in the National Consumer Research Council) were identified and contacted in advance of the fieldwork, and the rest of the interviews (20 in total, listed in Table 7) were generated through these first three key interviews. A summary table of the interviews is provided below.

Table 7: Benchmarking interviews

H1	National Consumer Research Centre, Assistant Director
H2	HCC, Economic and Planning Centre, Principal Officer/ ICT
H3	HCC, Economic and Planning Centre, Principal Officer/ Communications
H4	HCC, Economic and Planning Centre, Director
H5	HCC, Economic and Planning Centre, Principal Officer/ Organisational Development
H6	HCC, Director of Cultural Policy
H7	HCC, Social Services/ regeneration, Director of URBAN II
H8	Helsinki Urban Facts, research coordinator
H9	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, researcher
H10	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Assistant Director (Municipal finances)
H11	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Assistant Director (ICT and Information Society)
H12	Lasipalatsi ¹³ , ICT drop-in frontline customer services

¹³ The Cultural Office founded Lasipalatsi Film and Media Centre Ltd to manage and run its flagship building and media/technology-orientated projects based in central Helsinki. Lasipalatsi Ltd also coordinated the six EU-funded URBAN II projects between 2002 and 2006. The overall aim of URBAN II was to use culture in innovative ways to prevent spatial inequality and social segregation in areas of socio-economic deprivation.

H13	Lasipalatsi/ Mellari and Kontupiste, Manager
H14	HCC, Lahioasema/ social services department, frontline ICT support
H15	HCC, Lahioasema (social services department) frontline 2
H16	Active citizen 1 (East Helsinki)
H17	Active citizen 2 (East Helsinki)
H18	Volunteer, a grassroots citizen engagement project
H19	Amsterdam Citynet, Programme Manager
H20	Yankee Group, Anywhere Network (Next Generation), Director

4.3.6 Three core themes

Setting a thematic framework assists in setting the boundaries in the empirical research. In qualitative research, the setting of this framework is not a mechanical process, it requires “both logical and intuitive thinking” involving judgements about the relevance of issues and connections between ideas, as well as ensuring that the research questions are being addressed (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994, p. 180). The data generated in the main case study and during benchmarking were analysed without setting hypotheses or narrowing the concepts *a priori*. As stated earlier, the case study is based on an inductive approach, allowing scope for a reflexive process to guide the data collection and analysis.

The empirical work was organised and guided by three different themes as set out in Table 8. Themes 1 and 2 are presented as the ‘ideal aims’ couched in digital strategy and e-government policies, discussed in chapters 2 and 3. The third theme focuses on the central issue of lack of interest towards local e-government from citizens. The benchmarking chapter 5 incorporates elements of each of the three themes.

Table 8: Research thematic framework, chapterisation and objectives

Research Theme	Chapter	Research Objectives
1 The competitive, yet inclusive, city	5, 6	1, 4, 5
2 The efficient, yet citizen-centric, city	5, 7	2, 3, 4, 5
3 The paradox of supply and demand	5, 8	2, 3, 4, 5

Chapter 6 “Flagships and paddle boats” focuses mainly on the first theme around the competitive, yet inclusive city, and it provides an introduction to the Manchester

conurbation. The work on the digital strategy aimed to explore the drivers behind Manchester's approach to digital development vis-à-vis citizens, and to provide the context of Manchester's social and economic development agenda and how technology is perceived therein. The main focus here was the work done by Manchester Digital Development Agency, whose aim is to make Manchester:

"One of the most competitive yet inclusive e-enabled urban environments in the world based on a world-class and comprehensive broadband infrastructure which is used to promote access to skills, jobs and sustainable economic growth." (Carter, 2007, p. 20)

Theme 2 is discussed in chapter 7 "Turning the supertanker around", the empirical focus of which is MCC's programme of transformation, previously known as the Manchester Improvement Programme (MIP). In short, the MIP is the City Council's programme of service improvement and 'transformation' in response to the national Transformational Government agenda:

"The Manchester Improvement Programme's aim is to create a more joined-up workforce so customers can easily access all services centrally be it through the web, by telephone or in person. By redesigning the way we work and maximising the use of technology we can save time and money, which will allow us to do more and provide better services for the people of Manchester." (MCC, 2008a, p. 2)

Chapter 8 zooms into the perspective of "Citizens and neighbourhoods" in light of what has been described as the "paradox of supply and demand" in local e-government (Viitanen and Kingston, 2009). First, it reviews quantitative data illustrating the demand for e-government in Manchester. Furthermore, it reports the findings of the two focus groups with residents and interviews with front-line officers, active citizens and ward councillors in the selected neighbourhoods, Wythenshawe and Levenshulme. The central theme here was to discover residents' opinions and perceptions about technology, specifically focusing on the dichotomy between their role as a citizen and a consumer, and their experiences about communicating with the local authority.

Before the Manchester case study findings, the benchmarking research is reported in the next chapter.

5 BENCHMARKING

5.1 Introduction

As indicated in the previous chapter, the benchmarking consists of two elements; a European review of performance indicators and statistics, followed by a qualitative case study in Helsinki. As a benchmarking or 'good practice' case study, the research in Finland attempts to explain why Finnish citizens opt for e-government channels considerably more than in the UK.

The chapter is organised into three sections. First, a review of relevant European policies is offered, followed by an overview of international benchmarking indicators in the field of internet and e-government use by citizens. Finally, the Helsinki case study is presented. The case study comprises an introduction to the city-region, the city's IT strategy, and a bottom-up perspective from a regeneration neighbourhood.

5.2 E-government in Europe

This research uses ideas of democratic representation and governance as one of its central tenets, therefore the chosen international framework is the European Union. The EU is linked to the case study through supra-national forms of governance as well as through informal policy networks between cities. The EU exerts its influence not only through the community *acquis* but also by fostering activities in member countries by way of funding. In chapter 2.8.1 it was noted that the EU has had a significant role to play in promoting regionalism and cities. The EU also monitors performance in key areas and provides benchmarking information as well as 'good practice' guidance in the field of e-government (or latterly, digital economy).

5.2.1 Lisbon Strategy – a European knowledge economy

The overarching European policy framework until 2010 was the Lisbon Strategy. The Lisbon Strategy was first announced by the European Council in 2000 to be the main strategic framework for the economic and social development of Europe with the ambitious target of making Europe *"the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment by*

2010” (Euractiv, 2004).

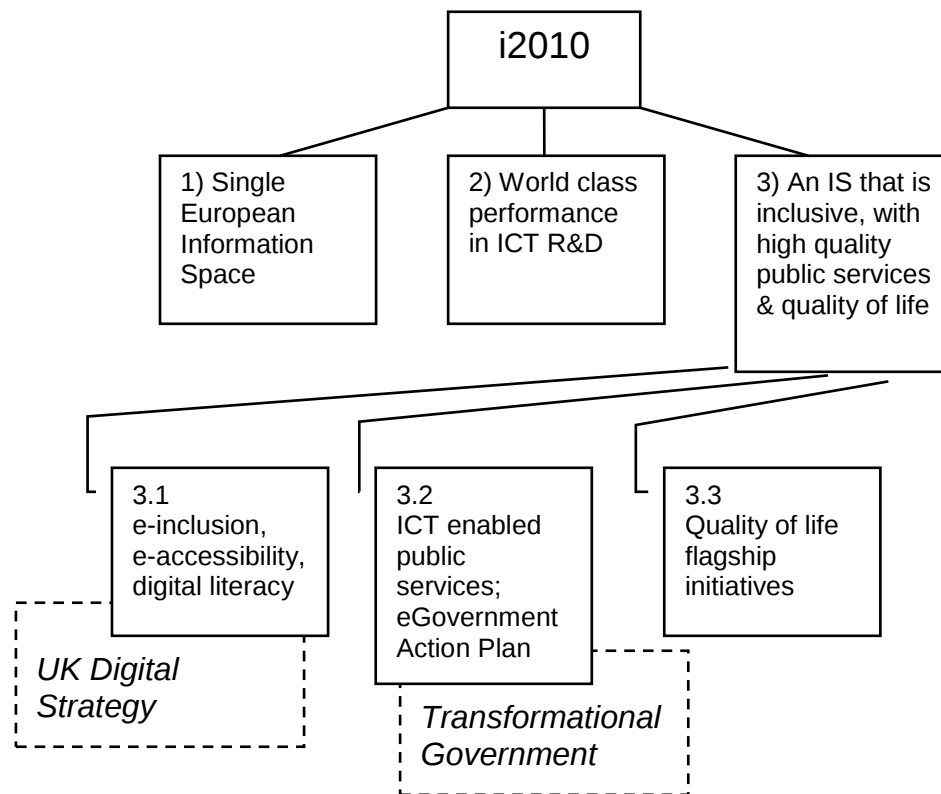
A critical success factor in achieving the 2010 goal was the transition to a knowledge-based economy. The Lisbon Summit was designed to declare a new era for the EU where information society technologies would play a major part in the achievement of the Lisbon 2010 targets, articulated in the *‘eEurope 2005 Action Plan’* which included specific commitments around e-inclusion (EC, 2002). After 2005, following the mid-term review of the Lisbon agenda headed up by the former Dutch premier Wim Kok, European policy priorities were firmly fixed around economic growth and jobs. Indeed, Kok spoke at a conference in Edinburgh in 2007: *“It would be wise if we Europeans took the issue seriously by reforming and actively restructuring our economies and by converting from less profitable economic activities to more competitive knowledge-based ones”* (Kok, 2007).

The EU's strategic framework (2005-2009) for e-government was entitled *‘i2010 European Information Society for growth and employment’* (EC, 2005a). It aimed to ensure that Europe's citizens, businesses and governments make the best use of ICTs, and as part of it the *e-Government Action Plan* was launched. As with the wider Lisbon governance cycle, the main responsibility for delivering the strategy lies with the member states (EC, 2005a). The Commission makes a strong case for the role of ICTs in driving growth and employment. It argues that 25% of EU GDP growth and 40% of productivity growth are due to ICT, and that differences in economic performances between industrialised countries are largely explained by the level of ICT investment, research and usage (EC, 2005b).

According to the Commission (EC, 2005a), i2010 has three objectives illustrated in Figure 6. It can be argued that whilst the Commission's *‘i2010 e-Government Action Plan’* (EC, 2006) detailed various multi-faceted outcomes and actions, such as strengthening public participation and e-inclusion, the *raison d’être* for the Action Plan was the potential benefits ICTs were believed to deliver in terms of economic gain and competitiveness. This conclusion reflects the policy hierarchy in the EU where the Lisbon Agenda was the guiding principle for all EU initiatives until 2010. Moreover, the Lisbon Strategy was a manifesto for a European knowledge economy in order to make the old continent globally competitive against its competitors; including China, India and the USA, thus supporting the idea of the “new economy” (see chapter 2.5).

Figure 6: i2010 objectives

(the corresponding UK policies marked with a dotted line)



(source: EC, 2005a)

5.2.2 Post-Lisbon Europe

The Europe 2020 Strategy (EC, 2010a), adopted in June 2010, replaces the Lisbon Strategy. By 2020, the new strategy aims to guide Europe's economy out of the recession which started in 2008. The new strategy re-enforces the need to raise productivity in Europe, and talks of European economic governance have emerged as a response to the global financial crisis. Plans are made to tighten the monitoring of the Europe 2020 plan in response to the unachieved targets of the Lisbon 2010 Strategy (Euractiv, 2010).

Simultaneously, the i2010 has been succeeded by the Digital Agenda, the aim of which is to “*deliver sustainable economic and social benefits from a digital single market based on fast and ultra-fast internet and interoperable applications*” (EC, 2010b, p. 1). The Digital Agenda was published on the basis of the ‘*Digital Competitiveness Report*’ (EC, 2009a). This chapter benchmarks e-government/information society indicators based on the Digital Competitiveness

report. Perhaps galvanised by the global recession in 2008, Europe's former information society agenda has firmly nudged towards a digital economy agenda which prioritises economic metrics and outcomes.

5.3 Why (next generation) broadband?

The assumptions about the positive economic and social impacts of the internet often result in active promotion of broadband adoption by governments. As discussed in chapter 2.8.3, the capacity of a region's data infrastructure is increasingly used as a yardstick for its competitiveness (e.g. Caio, 2008; Huggins *et al* 2008; Koutroumpis, 2009). There are hardly any dissenting voices about the overall positive effect of the use of advanced technology on economic growth in the mainstream, even if there is disagreement about whether internet technologies amount to the equivalent of a second industrial revolution and a paradigm shift into a "new economy" as argued by Castells (see section 2.5).

Major international policy advocates monitor "knowledge competitiveness". It is worth noting that there were no UK regions in the top 40 of the World Knowledge Competitiveness Index (Huggins *et al*, 2008), which is dominated by North American regions, despite the fact that broadband speed in North America lags behind many areas in Europe and Asia (ITIF, 2008). Of EU member countries, only Swedish, Finnish and Dutch regions featured in the top 20 in the WKCI. The UK's overall poor performance could partly be explained by the "basic requirements" pillar of competitiveness as defined by the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2009), which includes areas such as institutions, infrastructure, health and primary education, areas traditionally dominated by the Nordic countries.

Despite the sometimes patchy and inconsistent evidence on knowledge competitiveness, there appears to be a European-wide policy consensus around the pro-technology and pro-growth agenda. Moreover, internet adoption and fast broadband are argued to have a positive impact on democratic participation, too. Western post-industrial governments in the global north, as well as supranational organisations representing these nations, notably the EU, promote the internet as a tool for positive social change (EC, 2009a). However, compared with the economic orthodoxies of the technology agenda, no such uniformity about the social impact of the internet exists. It remains a contested ground with the opinions divided between the internet optimists and pessimists, as discussed in chapter 2.4.

“Quality of life” is one of the three pillars of the ‘Inclusive European Information Society’ objective of the i2010 programme (see Figure 6), therefore the official statistics collected by Eurostat cover this topic. According to the Commission, there is evidence to say that internet use enhances the quality of life of European citizens through enhanced social resources (EC, 2009a). From a democratic perspective, social resources would be important for an increased participation in civic life. The social and economic benefits of the internet are argued to multiply if the network’s capacity to transfer more content increases, and the assumption has been made that consumer demand for higher bandwidth is due to increase exponentially with the rise of Web 2.0 and more creative uses and content sharing online (EC, 2010b). Thus Europe’s Digital Strategy 2020 makes the case for Next Generation Broadband (NGB, or NGA for Next Generation Access), with fibre-optic cabling as the preferred technology. NGA, sometimes known as true broadband, is better able to cope with the rising demand for symmetric high-bandwidth services for transferring video, voice and data.

From a user- or citizen-perspective, any internet service is only as good as its ‘last mile’. The last mile is the part of the network that connects individual households to the nearest exchange. An interview with a broadband market analyst confirms that the market is unlikely to deliver universal Fibre to the Home (FttH) due to the cost incurred in the last mile in any fibre-optic deployments (H20). Next Generation projects promoting FttH are the most expensive yet inclusive option of delivering true broadband to the public, therefore also the preferred aim in the 2020 strategy (EC, 2010a). FttH accounted for approximately 1% of broadband connections in Europe in 2009 (EC, 2009b).

5.3.1 Internet/ broadband use “what makes Europeans click?”

Comparatively speaking, the UK has an inferior broadband infrastructure compared with many European nations in terms of average download speed (2.6 mbps in the UK, as opposed to 21.7 mbps in Finland, 16.8 mbps in Sweden or 8.8 mbps in the Netherlands) and monthly subscription price available to the consumer, although there has been a dramatic reduction in consumer prices between 2007 and 2008 (ITIF, 2007 and 2008). Nevertheless, internet and broadband use is widely spread in the UK, as seen in tables 9 and 10 below.

The information in this section is based on the European indicators used to monitor the i2010 objectives across the member states. They compare the UK against the benchmarking nation Finland, offering also the European average from the EU15 comparator group¹⁴. Table 9 demonstrates that the UK is above the EU15 average in terms of generic broadband access indicators, and even further ahead in terms of e-commerce, both in terms of percentage of individuals who have shopped online as well as proportion of business turnover from e-commerce.

Table 9: “Eurostat individual and enterprises information society indicators 2008”

	enterprises with broadband access ¹⁵	households with broadband connection	individuals ¹⁶ using the Internet at least once a week	individuals having bought online in last 3 months	% of enterprises' turnover from e-commerce
UK	87%	62%	70%	49%	21%
Finland	92%	66%	78%	33%	16%
EU15	86%	52%	60%	29%	4.4%

(Source data: Eurostat 2009)

The trend above is reversed in the e-government indicators in Table 10, the UK showing figures below the EU15 average for all three types of e-government use by citizens. This is in spite of the fact that online availability of public services is considerably above the EU15 average and that the British public are eager and able to use the internet for commercial/ other generic purposes.

Table 10: “E-government availability and individuals using the internet for interacting with public authorities 2008 and e-government availability”

	e-government availability	Citizens obtaining information	Citizens downloading forms	Citizens returning filled in forms
UK	89%	26%	14%	12%
Finland	67%	46%	32%	18%
EU15	68%	29%	18%	14%

¹⁴ Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Luxemburg, Sweden, Portugal, UK.

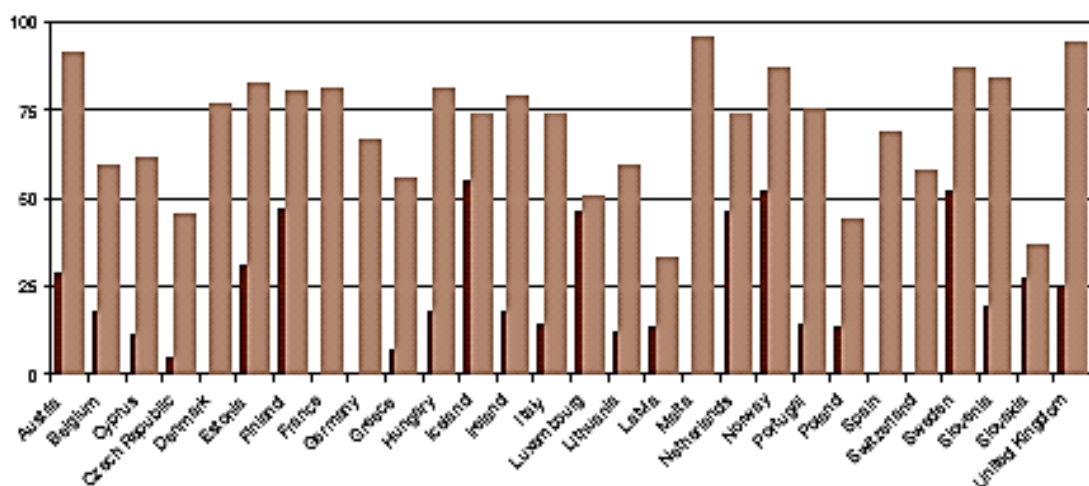
¹⁵ Enterprises (with at least 10 people employed) that are connectable to an exchange which has been converted to support xDSL-technology, to a cable network upgraded for internet traffic, or to other broadband technologies.

¹⁶ Individuals aged 16-74

(Source data: Eurostat 2009)

By contrast, despite the average availability of online public services, e-government take-up by citizens is considerably above the EU15 average in Finland. Figure 7 below outlines the average e-government supply/demand ratio in each EU country. Notably, the best e-service sophistication in Europe does not appear to coincide with high demand. Sweden appears to be the only EU country with notably high bars in both e-government sophistication and user demand (both Norway and Iceland are not being part of the EU).

Figure 7: E-government supply (light bar) and citizen demand (dark bar)



(Source: Capgemini, 2006)

Overall, e-government represents a small portion of overall internet use by citizens. Comparative statistics show that the internet is used primarily for search activity; according to the EC, Google is the most visited website in Europe. The other two main categories of internet use are online free video (such as YouTube) and social networking (EC, 2009a, p. 76).

A comScore (2007) study concluded that the UK has the most active online population, with the highest average number of daily visitors (21.8 million), the highest usage days per month (21 per user), and the highest average time spent online per month per user (34.4 hours). In terms of social networking, the UK population is claimed to be the most active in Europe and beyond. A survey by Ofcom suggests

that among G7 nations, only Canada had a higher take-up of social networking sites than the UK (Ofcom, 2008).

Social networking is one part of the burgeoning Web 2.0 phenomena discussed in chapter 2.5.2. As suggested earlier, its impacts on society, citizenship and governance are largely unknown; until recently social networking was widely perceived as something to do with teenagers. In January 2007, the BBC ran a headline “*Teens turn to social websites*”; at the time there were 2.7 million Facebook users in UK. Three years later, the figure was nearly ten-fold at 23.42 million (The Guardian, 2010).

In sum, the UK is a leader in terms of ‘e-commerce’, but showing much less activity in ‘e-democracy’, to refer to the typology by Thomas and Streib (2005) (see 3.3.1).

5.3.2 Digital divides in Europe

In 2008, approximately 33% of the EU’s population had never used the internet, and 40% did not have internet access at home, with very little change in recent years. Conversely, globally, it is estimated that approximately 70% of the world’s population has no internet access but growth is fast at the global scale with over 400% increase between 2009 and 2010 (Internet world statistics, 2010). The i2010 Digital Competitiveness report also monitors digital divides. Overall, the report summarises that:

“Countries exhibiting the strongest degree of equality are the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Luxemburg. This pattern corresponds largely to countries’ overall connectivity. (EC, 2009a, p. 23)

Predictably, countries with better connectivity tend to have less pronounced digital divides, but these countries also tend to be more equal socio-economically, whilst there is no causality between the two. However, as suggested in chapter 2.8.5, in the UK a lack of digital engagement corresponded with deprivation, therefore public authorities encourage and facilitate access to ICTs to ‘bridge the digital divide’. In Europe, Public Internet Access Points (PIAPs) became an important policy tool to enable public access to the internet in the early phases of the Information Society and e-government policy from late 1990’s onwards (Williams, 2008). Local authorities across Europe provided access to the internet without a charge through libraries, community centres and other means, such as internet kiosks (in the UK in

cooperation with BT).

Places of internet access were monitored in the EC's i2010 strategy up to year 2007, Table 11 below shows how the use of PIAPs has reduced dramatically in the UK between 2003 and 2006. Notably, despite the high level of broadband penetration in Finland in general (66% of households) Finnish citizens still used PIAPs most actively in Europe in 2006. In third place the UK's overall level of PIAP use is also high. The EC claims that overall *"the countries with the most citizens online in general are also the most active users of public access points"* (EC, 2007).

Table 11: Places of access to the internet

PLACE OF ACCESS	2003	2004	2005	2006	EU25 2006	RANK
% AT HOME						
Finland	45.0	49.3	56.3	65.5	42.6	6
UK	50.1	51.0	55.1	55.5		9
% AT WORK						
Finland	35.2	37.3	37.8	38.6	3.0	5
UK	27.2	29.4	31.0	30.2		8
% AT EDUCATIONAL PLACE						
Finland	15.8	15.8	(MISSING)	18.0	8.0	2
UK	10.5	10.6	10.4	9.8		12
% AT PIAP						
Finland	21.5	23.4	(MISSING)	15.7	6.8	1
UK	25.0	23.7	16.0	13.8		3

(Source data: i2010 Annual report 2007)

Chapter 3.5.5 introduced the concept of internet "will-nots" (Ryder, 2007); citizens who choose not to use the internet for reasons other than lack of availability. According to an EC survey, the main reason for not having the internet in the home relates to the perceived lack of need (38% of households). Other reasons cited included cost of equipment (25%), cost of access (21%), and a lack of skills (24%). The least important reasons relate to privacy and security concerns (5%) and physical disability (2%) (EC 2009, pp. 25-26). Notably, the lowest income quartile reported the perceived lowest need (40%). A notable exception to this are single parent families, where both access cost and equipment costs scored highly as a barrier, with a considerably lower proportion citing lack of need as the reason for not having home access (EC, 2009a).

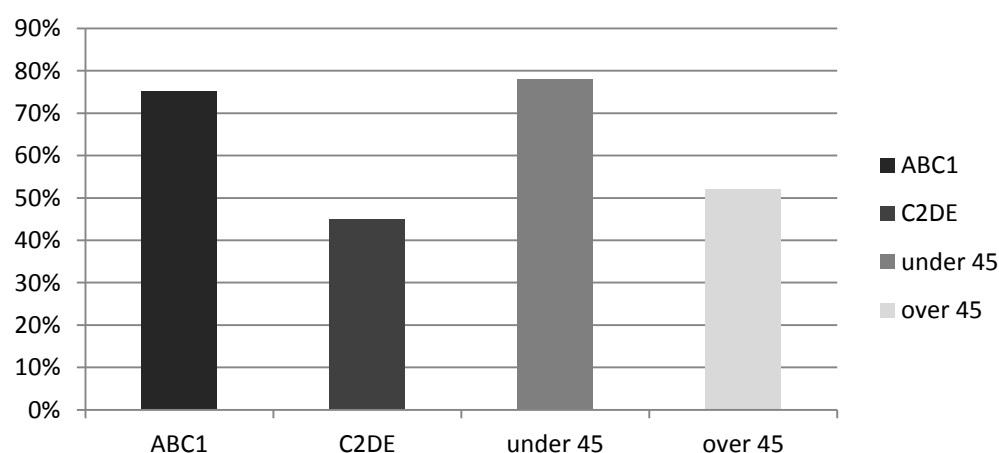
The i2010 indicators also measure internet user disparity, identifying the 'at risk'

groups of people who are less likely to use the internet, in the order of highest risk:

- 1) over 65's; 2) inactive (including retired); 3) low educated; 4) aged 55-65; 5) unemployed; 6) rural residents; and 7) women.

To understand the UK context, the results of a national survey into internet penetration are presented in Figure 8. Ofcom¹⁷ (2007) found that social class followed by age are the most significant predictors for internet adoption, suggesting that lower income groups and over 45's are less likely to have adopted the internet. The study uses the National Readership Survey classification of social grades: "ABC1" (higher income) i.e. upper middle class, middle class, lower middle class; and "C2DE" (lower income) i.e. skilled working class, working class, underclass/ entirely dependent on benefits.

Figure 8: Internet penetration in the UK by socio-economic group and age



(Source data: Ofcom 2007)

5.3.3 EU benchmarking summary

The benchmarking evidence suggests that countries with better connectivity in Europe also had the least digital divides and highest e-government use (e.g. Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands). In terms of digital divides, the Ofcom (2007) survey found that social class is the most likely factor to explain the lack of home broadband connection, followed by age, in the UK. However, the European evidence suggested

¹⁷ Ofcom is the independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries (www.ofcom.gov.uk)

that a perceived lack of need was the most often cited reason for not having a home internet connection, which was true also in the lowest income quartile. Ofcom (2008) highlights that the growth of home broadband take-up in the UK largely coincides with the explosion in the popularity of social networking sites.

The availability of online public services in Britain is better than that of Finland and most European countries; however, demand for e-government is very low. Instead, the UK is a leading nation in terms of e-commerce and social networking, suggesting that the nation is very active online in spite of the fact that the quality of the broadband network is inferior in terms of speed and cost compared with many western European nations.

Finally, what is known about the digital divide and access to local public services in the UK is that higher income groups and younger people are far more likely to have broadband access at home. Lower income groups and the elderly however are more likely to use or rely on local government services. This imbalance highlights the question of access to ICTs and e-government in deprived neighbourhoods. This is the logic which supports the qualitative enquiry in Helsinki, where an attempt was made to understand the high demand for local e-government services with a particular focus on a deprived urban district.

5.4 Helsinki benchmarking context

5.4.1 Introduction to Finland

In terms of e-government and Information Society benchmarking, the previous section confirmed that Nordic countries occupy a high position in international league tables. In Finland, citizens are particularly active in using electronic channels for contacting public authorities and finding out information.

Results from a European comparative study commissioned by the EC's eGovernment Unit re-enforces the message that the highest performing e-government services are found in Scandinavia where citizen trust and government transparency are rooted in a tradition of open government (Ecotec, 2007; Gronbech-Jensen, 1998). Salminen (2008) contends that strong trust in public organisations and local authorities is a traditional Nordic value. Andrain and Smith (2005) claim that Finland enjoys a reputation of higher-than-average levels of citizen participation, voting turnouts and

trust in the state institution. Moreover, on the topic of trust, Newton (2001) argues that:

“Among the nations for which we have figures, the highest levels of social trust are found among the wealthiest - Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland.” (p. 211)

Therefore, there may be a link between the level of wealth, the welfare state and trust which may in turn affect e-government adoption. Furthermore, trust and satisfaction with local government and e-government use have been linked in North American quantitative studies (e.g. Welch *et al*, 2005) as well as with technology acceptance and e-government use in Europe (e.g. Horst *et al*, 2007) see 3.6.3. This is why trust and e-government take-up is part of the conceptual framework (see 4.1.2)

5.4.2 A fiercely independent municipal sector

The concept of local democracy in the Nordic countries differs from that in the UK. Finnish municipalities remain fiercely independent from central government. A striking difference between Helsinki and Manchester is the degree of autonomy that Finnish municipalities generally enjoy in comparison with English local authorities. This was highlighted in the interviews with senior staff at the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities and Helsinki City Council:

“Over here, when talking about English local government/local authorities we understand it as just that, a local tier of government. By contrast, Finnish municipalities are autonomous, a position guaranteed by the Constitution. Until the recession in the 1990’s, rich and powerful municipalities like Helsinki would not take any notice of what central government bureaucrats were saying. Since the recession, they have learned to listen to and negotiate with the State.” (H11)

Another interviewee echoed this view:

“...until the 1990’s we (in Helsinki) frankly used to laugh at central government people, now we have learned to negotiate with them since they took away the local business rates and changed our tax revenue base.” (H7)

Changes from the 1990’s onwards are associated with the economic crisis in Finland which gave further impetus to a wider administrative reform, underway since the 1980’s. The reform, which introduced the principles of New Public Management, such as the application of market mechanisms and privatisation into Finnish local government (Nyholm and Haveri, 2009), resulted in even greater autonomy coupled with more fiscal challenges in the municipal sector:

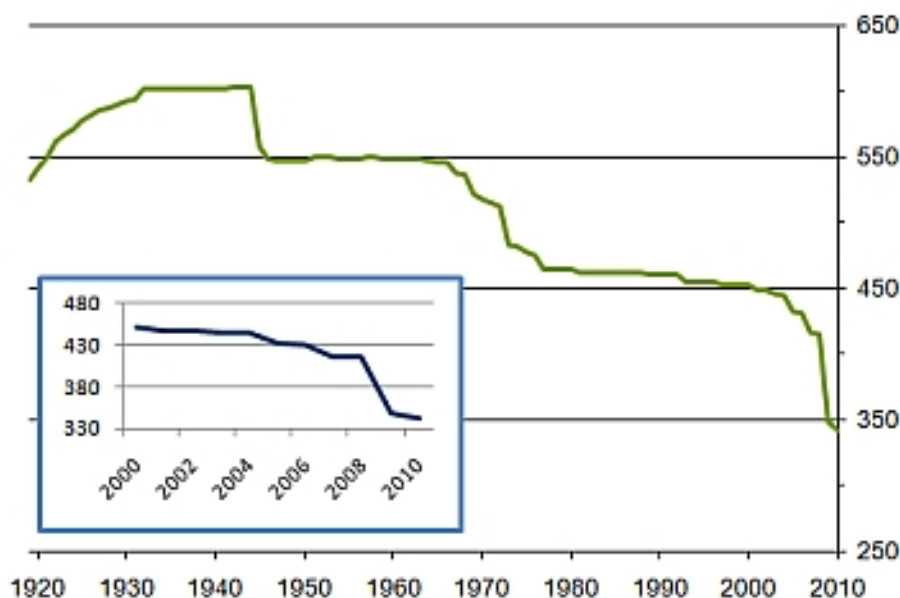
“The goal was to cut the strings between local expenditure and the central government grants to recognise the independence and economic responsibility of the municipalities... The reformed Finnish Local Government Act was introduced in 1995 and it gave more freedom, but less resources, to local authorities” (Salminen, 2008, pp. 1249- 1250).

This new fiscal environment, where many municipalities struggled to finance their legally-binding welfare services, resulted in municipalities seeking to cooperate with each other voluntarily to use resources more effectively (Nyholm and Haveri, 2009). The strain of the legal duty to provide welfare services as well as the resulting voluntary cooperation between municipalities were highlighted also in the interviews:

“The legal obligation to deliver welfare services is the same in Helsinki as it is in an off-shore archipelago municipality of 100 inhabitants. Organising services and joint procurement are based entirely on local voluntary arrangements, each collaboration being unique. It’s very rare these days for any municipality to organise their own waste disposal services, social or health care.” (H11)

What began as mutually cost-efficient joint procurement of services has resulted more recently in a rapid decline in the number of municipalities in Finland through the merger of a number of neighbouring municipalities. The number has reduced from 452 in year 2000 to 342 in early 2010 as depicted in Figure 9 (Kuntaliitto, 2010).

Figure 9: Number of Finnish Municipalities 1920 - 2010



(source: Kuntaliitto/ Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, 2010)

5.5 Helsinki city-region

5.5.1 Introduction

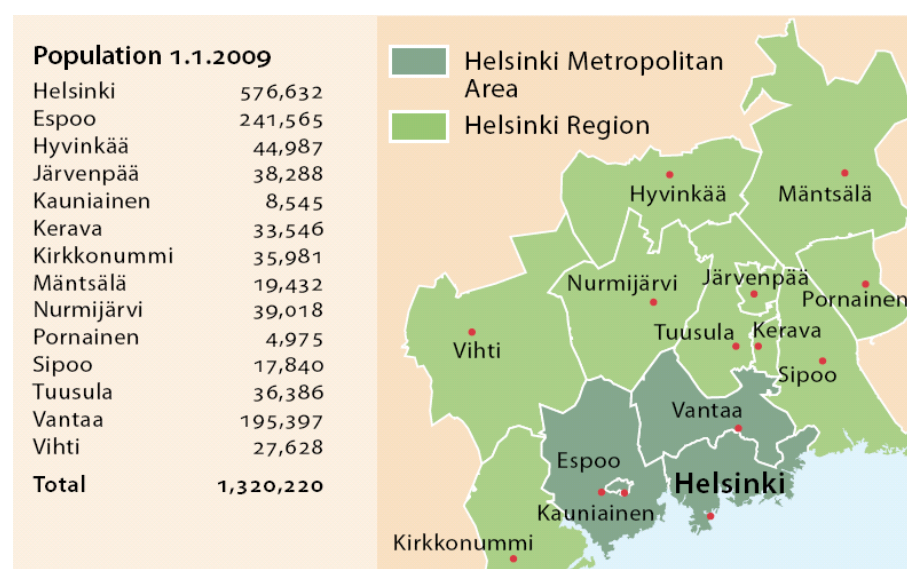
As seen above, the overall trend in the Finnish municipal sector is for increasing cooperation between local authorities in order to cope with the fiscal pressures. A closer look at the Helsinki city-region reveals that joint service provision is not only a model championed by small and sparsely populated rural municipalities, but also at an advanced level in the capital region.

There are two tiers of inter-municipal cooperation in the Finnish capital region. Helsinki metropolitan area consists of four municipalities, whilst Helsinki city-region incorporates 14 local authorities (see Figure 10) who manage cooperation within a framework which maximises local competence:

“In Finland municipalities are both strong and independent with respect to land use and provision of local public services. Currently, regional cooperation and decision making in the Helsinki region are based on voluntary, networking cooperation between the 14 municipalities and the state, without heavy regional bureaucracy or detailed legislation, which gives municipalities significant scope for managing local initiatives.” (Urban Facts, 2007, p. 26)

As with the city of Manchester within Greater Manchester, Helsinki is the sub-regional node in the capital region and the focus of the benchmarking research.

Figure 10: Helsinki City-Region (14 municipalities) and Helsinki Metropolitan Area (4 municipalities)



(source: City of Helsinki, 2009)

5.5.2 Helsinki's IT strategy

By way of introduction, Helsinki City Council (HCC) has 37 departments and over 40,000 employees. Each department has an autonomous culture reflecting the sense of independence in the municipal sector in general. As a result, customer services have largely been developed independently in each department, along with the supporting information systems. In the language of public administration, 'silos' have been prominent in an organisation of such a large scale, or as Sir David Varney would describe them, "islands".

IT coordination and strategy is the responsibility of the Economic and Planning Centre (EPC). The EPC is an 'expert unit' in management and strategic planning in HCC. The EPC operates as the Council's overall executive organ for planning, preparing and monitoring policies and supporting departments in implementation (EPC, 2007).

The familiarisation with Helsinki's IT Strategy 2004-2007 and 2007-2010 took place prior to the field work in situ. Based on these documents, it appeared that IT was indeed a strategic priority for Helsinki and central also to the overarching "metropolis vision" of the city-region in 2015. The overall aims were to increase competitiveness, productivity, regional and social equity, citizens' wellbeing and quality of life. Increasing regional cooperation in the metropolitan area is also central to the IT strategy. The document identified three strategic areas which contribute to the achievement of the "metropolis vision": 1) well-being and service provision; 2) competitiveness; and 3) urban structure, transport and living (EPC, 2007).

5.5.3 Metropolis vision and city image

Chapter 2 concluded that ICTs have been harnessed in Europe as a tool to enhance competitiveness, which is rooted not only in the arguments about productivity and growth, but also in enhancing the image of the city as a place-marketing tool. The IT strategy harnessed a programme of four "flagship programmes" specifically for this purpose:

"The flagship programmes speed up progress and contribute towards Helsinki's image. The projects are also used as a locus of learning for service innovations and disseminating excellence. Typically, the flagship programmes comprise several parallel conceptually interlinked projects." (EPC, 2007, p. 29)

The financing of the flagship programmes came from public-private partnerships; a combination of EU, national and local funds with cash from partaking private enterprises. The four programmes were as follows:

	<i>Programme</i>	<i>Focus/delivery</i>
1	Digital learning materials as part of e-learning	Schools
2	Health services online (health care)	Primary health care, city-regional scale
3	IT within everyone's reach	ICT centres (including Kontupiste), Lasipalatsi, "living lab" concept
4	Participation and feedback online	Map-based interface with a service directory and participation tools

For this research, programmes 3 and 4 were of most interest, particularly as "Kontupiste" is a local ICT drop-in centre in Kontula, the neighbourhood where the residents' focus group took place. "IT within everyone's reach" aims to increase citizens' new media skills and prevent digital exclusion through initiatives at libraries and Lasipalatsi. Lasipalatsi is a subsidiary of the City of Helsinki founded by the Cultural Office to run high profile projects, including URBAN II EU-funded regeneration initiative in East Helsinki where "Kontupiste" (local IT drop-in centre) was opened in 2002. (More details of Kontupiste and the regeneration initiative in section 5.6.)

When asked about the importance of the external image of the City, the Director of the IT department was coy:

"Image-promotion is not the driving force behind our operations, it is more of a by-product of what we do that we think has some value. Forum Virium and their innovation are perceived of as contributing strongly to social and economic policy. We (EPC) don't believe in catchphrases or gimmicks without sustainable funding and a future. Our main purpose is to improve the way in which mainstream services are delivered and we would rather focus on a few things at a time, and get credit for doing those well." (H4)

Overall, the interviewees were sceptical about the usefulness and value of international competitiveness and e-government indicators. The fieldwork interviews were preceded by Helsinki dropping dramatically to 45th place in one such index measuring the sophistication of online services. Two interviewees mentioned this

event without prompting (H2, H11). The potential damage to the city's image had caused upset among local politicians, as well as at ministerial level. One interviewee had been asked to attend a ministerial meeting to explain the reasons behind the poor rating, another had been asked to prepare a report for the City Council.

Helsinki's eagerness to adopt "social innovations", a recurrent theme in the IT Strategy, is linked to the values and the image of technology. When asked about what these social innovations might entail, one interviewee mentioned text messages to remind citizens of a dentist's appointment, suggesting that social innovations are primarily aimed at citizens' everyday life. These social innovations are largely developed through the EU's "Living Lab" concept, in partnership with technology providers in Helsinki (Forum Virium, 2009). "Living Labs" could be described as the latest wave in European city-led digital development founded in November 2006 under the auspices of the Finnish European Presidency; Manchester is a founding member of the network with ongoing Living Lab projects, such as DEHEMS smart energy metering in households (ENoLL, 2009; Carter, 2009).

5.5.4 Participation and feedback online

Unlike the other three flagship programmes, the participation and feedback initiative is owned by the EPC to promote interaction between city services and citizens via an online map-based GIS interface through HCC's website. The system was under construction during fieldwork in Spring 2008, estimated to be launched later in Summer-Autumn 2008 (which it was).

The central idea is that the map interface allows residents to make comments and give feedback across any organisational or bureaucratic boundaries: *"If you walk past a broken street light, a resident does not know whose responsibility it is to maintain street lighting"* (H2). Equally, anyone living (or interested in) an area can search the map for services available locally. The clustering of comments or feedback on a map is easier to visualise and assess strategically from the local authority's perspective: *"Tables with rows and rows of digits are difficult to digest – the patterns are much easier to detect on a map"* (H2).

The principles of Public Participation Geographic Information Systems in local government have been put forward in academia (Kingston, 2000), however, English local authorities have been slow to adopt these ideas (e.g. Kingston, 2007; Viitanen

and Kingston, 2009).

Overall, in Helsinki the language of efficiency did not dominate the IT strategy or implementation. The project manager described the spirit of the flagship project referring to the perceived 'democratic deficit' (see also 2.6.1):

"We don't talk about savings with the flagship projects. They tried to discuss savings in this context, but that's entirely wrong. These things have to be resourced properly. We have a legitimacy crisis in Finland to do with local democracy. Web services convey the spirit in which we operate, what are we really offering – are we open and transparent or not? Still, some Departments are afraid to open up online participatory channels, fearing that there is going to be an overwhelming amount of feedback." (H2)

One interviewee from the City Council's Urban Facts offered more critical views about citizen engagement, emphasising the need for mutual benefit and added value from participation:

"Many of the feedback buttons on the city's website currently are a bit of sticky plaster. They don't really connect with the service and sometimes the services are not even aware of the feedback functionality on the internet, they just end up in the generic email inbox. The idea that you must "consult" and "listen to" citizens all the time is not conducive to good democracy. Officers in day to day jobs have a good understanding about situations, but areas need to be identified where added value and mutual benefit could be achieved from public engagement." (H8)

Two examples of such mutual benefit from online engagement were offered. One is about controlling wild rabbits in Helsinki. The problem faced by the local authority was that individual citizens did not see the wild rabbits as a problem initially; instead, they liked to see "the cute things" in the city's parks and objected to their killing. However, a campaign where residents were asked to use mobile technology to report sightings of wild rabbits to locate them helped to build a shared understanding of the scale and nature of the problem which changed the public mood. Ultimately, a consensus was reached about the way in which the wild rabbits would be controlled (H8). Another example was a traffic safety scheme where residents could mark dangerous spots and make suggestions for improving road safety using an online map. This allowed moving away from the usual complaint/objection culture where "ready plans out for consultation" are objected to by often isolated individuals. Again, a shared view was formed online, incorporating other people's concerns and suggestions, combined with the strategic view provided by the planning authority (H2).

In both of these examples the internet allowed for a better outcome than would have

been possible by way of traditional engagement. Moreover, the benefits from public participation or deliberation (see Habermas, 2.6.1) were felt by citizens as well as the officers.

5.5.5 Invest to save

Whilst the aims around public participation were explicit, perhaps surprisingly, the IT strategy made no direct reference to (cashable) savings resulting from IT implementation. By contrast, the level of investment required was detailed, with reference to improved outcomes and an increased efficacy of services. IT expenditure without personnel costs was €63m in 2006, and the level of expenditure was estimated to rise to €80-90m per annum. Expenditure of the IT development programme (within each department) was estimated to double during the implementation period. This was justified from the perspective of international benchmarks according to which automation would invariably increase the expenditure on IT. As percentage of total operating costs, Helsinki's 1.9%, or €1700/ employee, was low compared with the international average of 5.1% or €10800/ employee.

When asked about the distinct lack of cashable savings targets in the IT Strategy, the idea seemed alien to the interviewee involved in the design and delivery of the IT Strategy: *"Savings? No, that's entirely false. IT is one massive cost to the authority, IT personnel being the most expensive element."* (H2)

The IT department had 15 permanent employees in 2006. In a period of less than two years, the IT team grew from 15 to 26 full-time posts to support the delivery of the Strategy. One reason for the increased staff resource was the lack of progress in achieving the online service delivery aims of the previous IT Strategy 2004-2007. Within the EPC, there was a view that there had been too much reliance on individual departments taking the lead on implementation previously, and too little central coordination. Political support for IT programmes had also been difficult. Councillors often feel the money would be better spent on frontline services, and not on back office support systems.

"When we wrote the previous strategy we imagined that each department would take an active lead in taking their IT development programmes forward, we relied too much on the leadership within each department to feel that they had ownership of the issue." (H4)

The 2007-2010 Strategy still relied on each department to deliver an implementation

strategy, but they were now coordinated by the EPC to ensure adequate resourcing and financial planning (H4). There was a universal recognition among the interviewees that Helsinki could have done better during the previous strategy period when progress seemed to have stagnated.

"Management doesn't have the skills to take into account the interplay between the possibilities allowed by technology and strategic planning. They also lack the skills to commission the right IT solution." (H11)

The view was also expressed that IT spending decisions were too often made in the short-term, on operational priorities or matching political cycles, instead of a true 'invest to save' spirit which may take 15 or more years to bear fruit. However, a degree of scepticism remained as to how much cash technology projects could save, with the wider benefits of service automation perhaps presenting a more credible argument rather than cash savings:

"You reduce demand for services if you pre-empt the demand. If a nursery place is a subjective right, why do you have to apply for a place? Or why have an application for child benefit, you should just receive it automatically. It's not about providing the form on the internet, it's about removing the form altogether. Electronic services as such are going to have a marginal impact on cost-efficiency of local government, the cost of education, social services and health care are so enormous." (H11)

5.5.6 Customer centricity and international convergence

Call centres and one stop shops have become mainstream in English local authorities, as argued in chapter 3.5.2. A near-total absence of customer contact centres, with the only exception of the Public Works Department, was therefore striking in Helsinki, also recognised in the interviews: *"This has been a blind spot in Helsinki. We are definitely behind in developments"* (H2).

There were discussions underway to create a central contact centre for telephone enquiries, and the idea was to combine the call centre with other technology, such as a live chat function modelled after the City Library customer services.

"Maybe because we have been so departmentalised, each department delivering their respective mandate, customer-centricity is a bit lost. But definitely there is a will to move in that direction." (H2)

The reasons for the lack of 'customer-centric' or 'joined-up' model were budget planning, policy ownership as well as target-driven culture, which have been a big

influence in how departments have operated traditionally. Many interviewees mentioned (ring-fenced) “pots of money” among the main barriers.

One HCC director agreeing on the prohibiting “same pot of money” principle, described how two regeneration initiatives (URBAN and lahioprojekti) had to be separated after the officers had pooled resources on the ground in Kontula, the case study neighbourhood, because the money was channelled through two different (government) departments:

“Inter-departmental cooperation has not been great. In fact, it has been so bad that we received a special request from the Council to improve joined-up service delivery across the departmental barriers.” (H7)

It could be concluded that HCC’s departments have continued to work in silos, but that convergence with international trends was underway. Plans were made to introduce not only a contact centre for the Council but also a one stop service platform shared between private and public service providers. This signals a convergence with private-public partnerships in service provision, as seen in public sector reform in the UK. However, in Finland this was not thought to offer savings, on the contrary: *“It is of no benefit to the public purse, on the basis that things are made easier for the customer. The culture is definitely changing, and we think much of this emanates from the UK.” (H11)*. Policy and knowledge transfer is therefore active inside the EU, and Finnish policy-makers look to the UK for ‘customer-centric’ e-government policy.

5.5.7 Who remains under the flyover bridges of the information superhighway?

Moving on to consider the inclusiveness of HCC’s IT Strategy, on the surface the city appears to face less of a challenge in terms of digital inclusion than many other European cities. Internet adoption rates are very high in Helsinki, the IT Strategy estimates that 80% of the adult population use the internet for services like e-banking and that the majority would choose the online channel as their first choice to contact the City Council, too. *“I have seen figures higher than that”*, commented one interviewee (H2).

The main effort in the digital divide domain relates to knowing who remained on the other side and ensuring these people would be kept informed: *“There has been talk nationally about whether or not we should get rid of (paper) telephone directories*

entirely" (H2).

The level of digital literacy among the population was high, partly perhaps due to major programmes that had been rolled out in the early 2000's to target "at risk" groups.

"Older people and workless, the users of Kontupiste¹⁸ ... those groups are getting smaller. In the first half of the decade there was a whole raft of SITRA¹⁹ - funded programmes to "get grannies online". That focus has now shifted, penetration is so high. SITRA's funding for example now favours innovation-orientated projects." (H2)

As part of their IT Strategy, the municipality has informally audited the people and places in their own organisation without adequate (or any) internet access, and by their own admission "we've had some surprises":

"Homes for looked-after young people had sometimes no internet at all, only the city's intranet but you can't let them use that. Some nurseries had no internet connection." (H2)

Whilst pockets of digital exclusion remained, there appeared to be a wide-spread perception that there was no alternative to electronic channels in many public services. During the neighbourhood case study, residents and front line staff in the community centre were under the impression that applications for social (council) housing could only be made online. Anecdotally, customers had to either submit an electronic form or else go to the housing office, where an online form would be filled in with a member of staff. The Housing Department disputed this and confirmed that they still accepted paper applications, but that over 90% of new applications for social housing were made online. The interesting fact is that even at senior level in the City Council, no one disputed the widely held view that housing applications could only be made online. This resulted in specific demands being placed on frontline officers working in PIAP/ drop-in centres. One front line member of staff in Kontupiste confirmed that work often involved an impromptu 'citizen's advice' role:

"We get asked for help with online applications and such like, to do with benefits, housing, health, whatever, which is quite difficult because we are

¹⁸ Kontupiste, an ICT drop-in centre in Kontula is where the neighbourhood study was conducted with a focus group of residents

¹⁹ SITRA is a national public innovation fund supervised by Parliament. Sitra's duty has been to promote stable and balanced development in Finland, the qualitative and quantitative growth of its economy and its international competitiveness and co-operation

ill-equipped here to deal with those kind of queries, we're not trained for it"
(H13)

In light of this, despite the declining trend in PIAP use reported earlier in section 5.3 (Table 11: **Places of access to the internet**), local ICT drop-in centres would appear to be a valuable resource particularly in areas where there is a high dependency on public services, such as the neighbourhood case study, Kontula.

5.6 Kontula neighbourhood

In terms of selecting a neighbourhood for the bottom-up research in Helsinki, a disadvantaged neighbourhood was identified where interventions had taken place in terms of urban regeneration and ICT-led projects.

Kontula, a 1960's suburb in East Helsinki has a population of approximately 13,000, with a population density close to the city average of 2707 inhabitants per square kilometre (HCC, 2009). Kontula has suffered from socio-economic decline particularly after the 1990's recession in Finland. After the recession, Kontula did not recover at the same rate as the rest of the city resulting in a socially more polarised area. Unemployment and immigrant population are twice the city's average (both at approximately 16%).

Perceptions of Kontula vary a great deal. HCC research argues that Kontula is one of the most difficult areas in Helsinki when measured against a number of indicators of disadvantage: long-term unemployment, low income, benefit claimants, child protection issues, health and crime. However, local residents often feel that their area has been unfairly labelled as bad, and that in fact Kontula was a good place to live with sports facilities and other services, a shopping mall and metro connecting it to the city centre (Urban Facts, 2007). The local portal www.kontula.com, maintained by local active residents, reflects these polarised views of the area in a discussion entitled "*Kontula – a quality suburb or a slum?*" (kontula.com, 2008).

In recent years, Kontula has had two concurrent urban regeneration programmes, both with European funding streams:

- URBAN II (EU) 2002-2006: a culture-led regeneration programme with an Information Society theme. One of the flagships of the programme was the

opening of Kontupiste, a media and ICT hub/drop-in centre, in 2002 (see Figure 11).

- LAHIOPROJEKTI 2000-2004, 2004-2007: A programme of social and physical area-based regeneration led by Social Services. A community centre (Lahioasema) was opened in Kontula as part of this initiative, with a variety of activities from coffee mornings to exercise classes offered to residents. On-site is also a suite of PCs with internet access, printer and scanner, as well as informal advice provided by the staff.

The citizens focus group took place at the community centre (Lahioasema) whilst the pilot survey was conducted at both ICT drop-in centre Kontupiste and Lahioasema.

Figure 11: Kontupiste ICT hub interior



(source: author)

5.6.1 Pilot user survey

There were 39 respondents in total; 23 females and 16 males. There was a 50/50 split in terms of home computer availability. An important observation here is that PIAPs are not used solely by those who have no home internet access. This explains partially why Finland has such a high percentage of PIAP use in the European context (see Table 11: **Places of access to the internet** in chapter 5.3.2).

All age groups were captured in the pilot survey, although there is a high proportion of 56-65 year olds. Socio-economically, more than half of the respondents (n= 24) were retired or workless. It could be said that the pilot survey captured a sample of residents 'at risk' of digital exclusion, according to European statistics reviewed in chapter 5.3.2. Half of the respondents (n= 18) preferred the internet as their first channel choice when contacting the local authority. Telephone came second (n= 12), face-to-face third (n= 9).

5.6.2 Making channel choices

The survey included an open-ended question, asking respondents to justify, in their own words, their first preference for local government access channel (web, telephone, face to face). The main themes emerging from the responses are listed below, but this quote seems to capture the feelings of many of the people who took part:

"Internet is the easiest, on the phone there's always queuing, face-to-face is nicest but most laborious to put into practice"

(# 26, female, employed, home PC with internet connection)

The following main reasons influencing channel choice were identified from the pilot survey:

1. Ease of use / practicality

The most often quoted reason was "ease of use", or "practicality" in the case of both the telephone and the internet. Some of those who had chosen the telephone as their first choice said that it is a practical choice because they did not have a home PC.

2. Speed

Speed was one of the most popular reasons for choosing the internet. The telephone divided opinions in terms of speed. Some respondents felt that the telephone was the fastest method of contact for them, conversely, others felt that they would not use the telephone because it is "too slow" (queuing).

3. Time to think

“Irrespective of time, time to think in peace about what one is doing”

(#32, male age 46-55, workless/looking for a job,
home PC without internet connection)

If “speed” is a popular reason to choose the web channel, the exact opposite reason described as “time to think” by one respondent, is also true.

Many respondents, most often but not exclusively in the 66+ age group felt that they would forget to mention relevant things on the telephone (because they are nervous, or otherwise), or that they would simply forget (or not hear properly) things that are said to them on the telephone. They find it easier to follow and memorise things that are in written form on a screen. Some simply preferred to take their time and “think through” what they were doing in their own pace. A feeling of being in control of the process and its pace was associated with the web channel.

4. Money

Only two respondents referred directly to the cost of the interaction, for both of them the cost of making telephone calls was a deterrent, therefore they preferred the internet. Four respondents expressed preference for online channels, but could not afford a home PC therefore used other channels (telephone or face to face).

5. Human contact

Those respondents who preferred face-to-face contact invariably reported the importance of the “human element” for various reasons. Many felt that it is simply nicer to talk to people. Many were also concerned that if there was a complicated issue or a problem, face-to-face contact offered the best chance of resolving it there and then.

A young man gave an eloquent justification for his preference towards the face-to-face channel:

“Your opinion, the importance of the issue & feelings are represented best”

(#19, male, age 15 or under, at school,
home PC without internet connection)

6. Trust/ responsibility

One respondent explained in detail how dealing with the public authorities face-to-face put the responsibility of the proceedings firmly with the professional behind the counter, therefore they preferred this channel.

Likewise, concerns about potential problems or having to deal with complicated queries/processes would seem to make respondents favour human interaction, something that signals a greater trust in human discretion, or the professionalism and the ability of the public authorities to resolve issues. By the same token, these people lack trust in their own ability to navigate what might be complex processes.

In sum, perhaps surprisingly, money is not a major consideration when it comes to choosing a channel to access public services. Instead, ease of use, convenience, perceived benefits of human contact and other *qualities* of the interaction seemed much more important than the *cost*. Time is important in the channel decision, be it “time to think”, or an attempt to save time.

The results of the pilot survey would broadly seem to support the claim by the City Council that most people prefer the internet as their first choice (half of respondents), telephone came second and face-to-face last. These results do not show quite as wide-spread support for the online channel as claimed by the city administration whose own research quotes 80% support for the web.

The themes arising from the pilot survey were discussed more deeply in the focus group reported in the next section.

5.6.3 Focus group

The focus group was held at the Kontula community centre ('lahioasema') in June 2008. There were five participants, four females and one male. Their age range was 35 – 72, and one participant had an immigrant background. One member was currently in employment, the others were either retired or workless. All of the participants were regular visitors to the Kontula community centre, and all of them had experience of using the internet, two had internet connection at home.

Figure 12: Lunch after the focus group



(source: author)

Firstly, the reasons for using the internet were discussed. The group was consensual about the benefits of using the internet, it is cost-efficient and convenient:

“A big bonus about using the web is that it is free so there’s a big motivation to look up information yourself, rather than make phone calls because of the cost of phone calls”.

“It’s up to date and convenient”

The reasons for using e-government were grouped according to the e-government typology (Table 2: **A typology of citizen-initiated e-government interaction**, see chapter 3.3.1); informational, transactional and participatory.

When looking for *information*, the group thought that online information is updated promptly, almost in real time, whereas with the telephone there is a feeling that one could be left “*hanging on the line for ages*” or “*they never return the call*” (NB telephone call would most often be directly to a specific officer, not to a generic call centre as only one of the City Council’s 37 departments operated a contact centre). Furthermore, in terms of information enquiries, there is a sense of transparency and accountability associated with emails, rooted in personal positive experiences:

“You always get a response to an email”

The group felt that the internet is a “window to the world” rather than a window to the local (although one third of the pilot survey looked up local information on the net). The local newspaper was the first place where the group would look for local news and information.

“I always think that it is the World Wide Web, looking up local things is not the first thing on your mind”

An elderly participant joined the conversation:

“Is there local information available, about neighbourhoods, online? Could I go and find out about Haaga, where I used to live? I’m learning new things all the time!”

When talking about *transactional* services specifically, the participants were well aware of what can/cannot be done online. They reported having booked GP’s appointments, school places, library books, as well as reported crimes, paid rent and applied for housing.

“You shouldn’t have to print the form out and pay 70 cents, you should be able send the form directly online and receive confirmation by email. If you print and post, you lose money. Not all council services are available online at all.”

Helsinki’s lack of progress in making its services wholly e-enabled had been noticed by the residents. When presented with the vision of a ‘citizen portal’ where all municipal services would be accessed through a ‘single window’, opinions were divided. Some initially thought it “*sounds ok*”, but others disagreed:

“I wouldn’t like that. Services get worse in a way, we’re moving away from personal services and pushing the responsibility onto the citizen”

This idea was also expressed in the pilot survey, a ‘responsibilisation’ of the client through self-service. Despite their overall positive experiences with the internet, the idea of a citizen’s portal did not appeal to the group:

“Sounds like surveillance society – you are being monitored. You are a number that can be tracked everywhere and anywhere. That is sort of bad service, although it is advertised as good service. It is self-service”

“What about data protection? Is that the responsibility of the service provider?”

“Say, if there was such a citizen portal and I could look up information and see

whether something has been processed or not, but what good is that? Instant feedback would be much more important, to get answers to your questions.”

Residents associated the internet with a decline in customer service culture; “do it yourself” is accepted, not necessarily celebrated. The same sentiment applied to both public and private services.

In terms of *participation* and civic activities, some participants had responded to public consultations online, and they had experiences of discussion forums. In terms of communication and interaction, most participants felt that the anonymity of the web can encourage frivolous behaviour.

Specifically on e-participation, the opinions were divided and a debate sparked among the participants whether or not the Council was “good” about taking residents views into account:

“Thinking about the municipality, they should use the internet so that locals can express their opinions and the decision-makers should take that into account. They should take them (local views) forward in their programmes.”

“Well, they already do that, I have even take part.”

“Maybe so, but only once in a while, they should consult more, they seem to lack interactivity or responsiveness.”

“It’s not possible to respond to every single request, besides they may not have developed these advanced participation tools yet.”

“I always think of society as something outside the internet. Societal matters are far too dependent on the internet these days. I’d like to have societal matters being discussed face-to-face with people locally.”

Discussing the ‘digital divide’, there was a widely accepted view among the participants that life without access to the internet would be difficult. An older participant said:

“I went for two years without a computer, and it was terrible. I hadn’t found this place yet (the community centre). Now I wonder whether it’s worth my while keeping the laptop because they have everything here, including a scanner and a printer, and someone to give you advice.”

Furthermore, the digital divide is seen as something quite palpable and socially divisive, and residents felt that the internet can exacerbate inequality:

“Really, it divides people into to two “castes”. For example, I consider myself quite young, but I feel that because I haven’t got a home computer, I experience inequality even though I know how to use computers very well and can use these free (internet) facilities.”

“The internet should not be taken for granted; you have to have certain skills. There are lots of people who can’t use the internet. You can’t just tell them to go online, it is definitely offensive.”

“With the internet, inequality gets worse because bank services are so expensive over the counter.”

“They’ve definitely gone over the top with all this ‘check online for more details’, that’s all you hear now on TV.”

Focus group members also noted that some local services, including banks and public sector offices, had closed or would soon close in Kontula due to cost-efficiency. The alternative for accessing these services in the future is either online, or else a longer journey to the new location.

5.7 Benchmarking summary

Why do Finns use e-government? It is quick, easy and most of all flexible. It is perceived as a “free” channel (relating also to the fact that PIAP users can access the internet for free). Whilst citizens had positive experiences of using e-government, they were still critical of the self-service culture which proliferated online, and they were wary of the sense of responsibility which was shifted onto the citizen through self-service.

It seems to hold true among Finns that a positive experience of e-government can create a “virtuous circle”, as suggested in the conceptual framework. Those who had given feedback or taken part in public consultation seemed to have a more positive opinion about the City Council’s intentions than those who had not. One interviewee described this as a ‘halo effect’ (H1) with experiences ‘radiating’ to other areas.

A ‘myth’ was expressed by many of the professional interviewees that Finns are naturally shy and therefore that would explain the popularity of the web channel. This view however was not supported by the focus group nor the pilot survey. A likely explanation is that consumers in Finland, like all the Nordic countries, adopt new technologies faster than in mainland Europe, according the National Consumer Research Council. The average Finnish household also spends a bigger proportion of their disposable income on electrical gadgets than their European counterparts (H1).

However, contextual factors are likely to play a part; good digital connectivity, high standard of education and comparatively less socio-economic division, all of which correlate with digital divides across Europe. Many people who would fall on the wrong side of the digital divide elsewhere in Europe still have the means and ability to access online channels in Finland. PIAPs are invaluable in neighbourhoods like Kontula, even if their usage rates are reducing slowly; there are approximately 20% less people using Kontupiste now than there were in 2002 when it first opened. The experience on the ground also shows that those with the highest need of public services often have the most questions about how to access public services, particularly online. Staff in PIAPs often had to advise citizens with queries which often had nothing to do with technology, and sometimes found themselves ill-equipped to give advice.

Citizens think that the local newspaper is unbeatable for disseminating local information and for reaching local residents. However, the local active residents use the internet routinely to organise things in their “trusted group” to the point of being reliant on it. Even with the unbeatable reach of the local paper, the internet offers something else, according one HCC officer who ‘doubled up’ as an active resident in his neighbourhood:

“The internet is a strategic tool. It can create publicity on a scale which the local newspaper can never match. We use the internet to document what has gone on, it forms a collective memory. If we didn’t do this, there would be no audit trail of what happened in the neighbourhood and people (authorities, businesses) can behave badly. Morality goes up when transparency increases, this is what the internet has given us. We reach every household with our free local newspaper, but it goes in the recycling bin afterwards.” (H5)

In Kontula, the local website kontula.com was an entirely bottom-up initiative created by local volunteers in cooperation with local sports clubs and traders. Generally, the technologically savvy active volunteers perceived the City Council as “stiff” and “a bit 20th century” in their approach to IT.

“There used to be no useful information whatsoever about Kontula on the net. We created this site because there was nothing. That’s a big gap if you think about the high turnover in many of the socially rented properties, and the proportion of people coming into the area from abroad. We really needed a local focal point online for basic information, that’s how it started.” (H18)

However, when it came to local democracy, the focus group as well as the interviews with citizens were consistent in their message:

“There’s talk about virtual societies all the time, but face-to-face is more important... What we want ultimately is to have a local democratic forum where matters are discussed, face to face, between politicians, the officers and citizens” (H18).

E-democracy can support participation and deliberation online, but it is not considered adequate for good local democracy by the citizens.

5.7.1 Reflection on spatial transformation in the Network Society

In Helsinki metropolitan area closer cooperation was sought with neighbouring authorities, thus reflecting the wider European trend of city-regions gaining momentum (see 2.8.1). Aggregation and economies of scale were sought as a direct result of mounting fiscal pressures in delivering statutory services. Helsinki’s IT Strategy also actively sought greater integration with neighbouring authorities and shared services. It is argued that this reflects spatial transformation in the Network Society, and a growing distance between ‘place’ and ‘life’s everyday functions’, as Castells observed (see 2.1.1).

Citizens in Helsinki had accepted the Internet as the first port of call for many everyday services, whilst this was convenient most of the time, the feeling was expressed that customer service is often non-existent as a consequence. With public services, self-service channels made people feel more responsible, or exposed, in case of any potential mistakes. This is why some still preferred face-to-face interaction, particularly with complicated matters. Overall, online channels were trusted to be up-to-date, and public authorities in particular responsive to electronic service requests or queries. In the disadvantaged neighbourhood of Kontula, ICT drop-in centres provided a ‘lifeline’ to the space of flows, where the local residents could access more affordable services online, exemplified by the situation with banking service charges.

Despite Finland being a nation of Europe’s most active e-government users, notions of local democracy seem to remain firmly rooted in the offline environment. Nevertheless, examples of internet use to facilitate place-based dialogues between the municipality and citizens were discovered, epitomising the potentially spatially sensitive and democratising ‘counter-trend’ of new technologies.

The next chapters 6, 7 and 8 outline the main case study of Manchester. These chapters reflect the three research themes, introduced in

Table 8: Research thematic framework, chapterisation and *objectives* (see section 4.3.6). Chapter 6 looks at how digital development in Manchester aims to create a “competitive, yet inclusive city”. Chapter 7 explores the City Council’s programme of transformation entitled the Manchester Improvement Programme, which ties in with the second research theme “efficient, yet citizen-centric city”. Chapter 8 focuses on the grassroots, bottom-up perspective of the lived experience in two Manchester neighbourhoods, exploring the “paradox of supply and demand” research theme.

6 FLAGSHIPS AND PADDLEBOATS – DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT IN MANCHESTER

6.1 Introduction

The case study of Manchester aims to uncover the role of ICTs in urban strategy and governance. It explores how Manchester has responded to the global challenges of the Network Society described in chapter 2, specifically how the city's technology agenda addresses the pressures around social inclusion and economic growth. Chapter 6 is mainly concerned with research objectives 1 and 4 (see chapter 4.1.3)

Chapter 6 is divided into two main parts. The first part offers an introduction to the socio-economic and administrative evolution of 'Manchester', which is argued to be a fluid term. In the course of this research, Manchester's city-region pilot status was confirmed in April 2009 when the fieldwork was nearing completion. The city-regional developments are considered throughout this chapter where relevant, and taken forward for further discussion in chapter 9.

The second part of chapter 6 narrates the emergence of the digital development agenda in Manchester. The future of ICTs emerged as an area of interest concurrently with the place-marketing and "boosterism" associated with Manchester's post-industrial economic development from the late 1980's onwards.

Finally, the achievements and trade-offs during Manchester's trajectory of digital development are highlighted, rooted in a radical and progressive agenda but ultimately having to find a niche in the hegemony of sub-national economic growth policies in order to remain competitive.

6.1.1 Manchester: a tale of two cities

As a starting point, it is highlighted that Manchester's resident population is poor; it is the fourth most deprived local authority in England according to the 2007 IMD. Since the launch of the Urban Task Force (1999) and New Labour's vision for urban renaissance, Manchester has become a site of urban regeneration on an

unprecedented scale coupled with strong economic growth. This has resulted in Manchester overtaking Birmingham as the UK's top business destination outside London, and a place in Europe's top 20 business destinations (Cushman and Wakefield 2007 and 2008). Due to its economic growth, physical transformation and strong leadership, Manchester is often hailed as a success story in the wake of the Urban Renaissance White Paper (Hebbert, 2010). However, Manchester tells "a tale of two cities", as reported by the Manchester Evening News in conjunction with the publication of the "Breakthrough Manchester" report by the centre-right think tank Centre for Social Justice:

"Tories will today paint Manchester as a tale of two cities - a booming centre surrounded by areas riddled with debt, disease and drugs" (MEN, 2007)

Indeed, the Central Manchester parliamentary constituency has one of the highest levels of child poverty in the country according to research by End Child Poverty (2009).

Against this backdrop, the case study is purposely designed to take into account the two sides of Manchester; the top-down strategies of the city's leadership (in chapters 6 and 7) as well as from the bottom-up view of ordinary Mancunians in the hinterlands of inner city neighbourhoods (in chapter 8).

The ensuing section uncovers some of the reasons for the high concentration of deprivation in Manchester as well as the dynamics of the city-region from a political, socio-economic and spatial perspective.

6.2 From Cottonopolis to Ideopolis

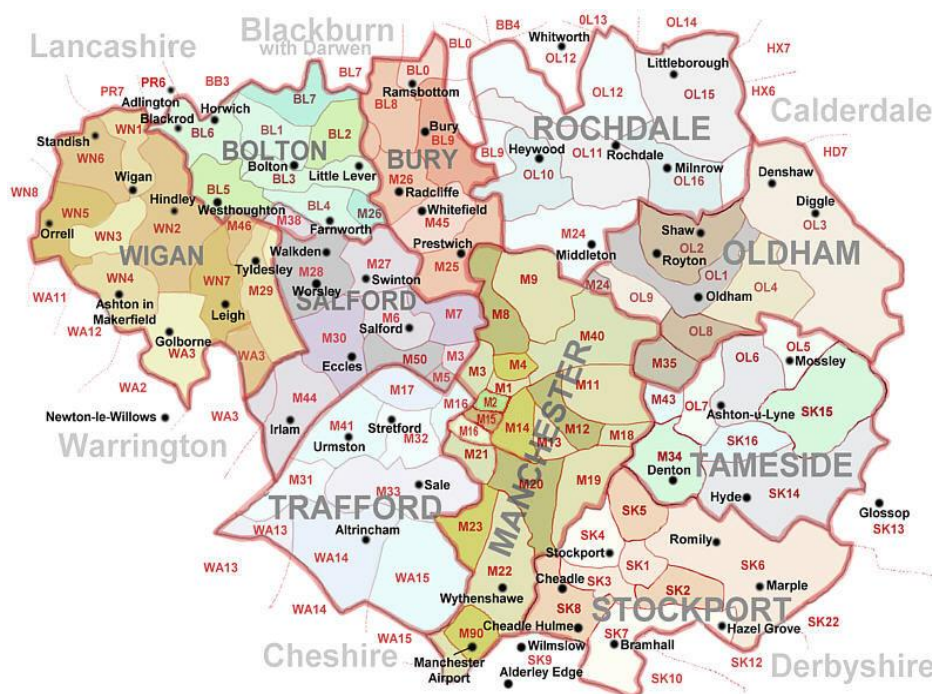
Manchester is known as the cradle of the industrial revolution, imbued with extremes; abject poverty alongside exceptional economic growth, urban decay and urban regeneration on an unprecedented scale. Notably, *"Manchester has become one of the most widely cited examples of entrepreneurial urbanism"* (Ward, 2003, p. 124).

The Manchester-centred conurbation is a complex space-economy moulded by its efforts to revitalise the economy and to identify a profitable scale to govern the area. In this process, *"Greater Manchester's local government has been re-organised twice in the last 20 years in order to meet the area's governmental needs"* (Barlow, 1995, p.

382). In 2009, as part of the government's 2009 budget (HM Treasury, 2009) Manchester's city-region pilot status alongside Leeds was confirmed, bringing a third wave of political-administrative reform to the area.

'Manchester' is often used as shorthand for the wider conurbation consisting of ten local authorities which form the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA), depicted in Figure 13 below. 'Manchester' is thus a fluid concept: *"In the Manchester city region we tend to use the names Manchester, Greater Manchester and the Manchester city region interchangeably"* (Knowledge Capital, 2009, p. 3). Over and beyond the geographical definition and administrative boundaries, Manchester is a brand as well as a model for urban entrepreneurialism.

Figure 13: Map of Greater Manchester Authorities



(Source: www.manchester2002-uk.com/maps)

Manchester's emergence as the dominant player is riddled with controversy; political, economic and cultural tensions within the region as well as vis-à-vis central government. The city's rivalry with other conurbations within the Northwest, as well as the resistance to Manchester's status as the lead within "Greater Manchester" is acknowledged in literature (Barlow, 1995).

Against its industrial legacy, Manchester has of late tasked itself with being among *“the world’s premier league of digital cities, competitive yet inclusive”* (Carter, 2007). As section 6.3 on digital development demonstrates, the idea around the “digital city” goes back over two decades. It is only recently, linked to the increasing policy convergence around the knowledge economy in the city-region that the ideas have truly mainstreamed in policy terms.

6.2.1 The rise, fall and rebirth of the world’s first industrial conurbation

Manchester has been said to be the first industrial metropolis in the world, or “cottonopolis”, whose burgeoning economy was built on cotton spinning and textile weaving technologies in the nineteenth century. Manchester’s industrial boom in the late 19th century, the dramatic decline of the manufacturing industries in the middle of the 20th century and the subsequent re-birth of the re-branded city as a globally competitive conurbation has been documented widely in literature (Quilley, 2000; Hebbert and Deas, 2000; Deas and Ward, 2002).

At the height of the industrial revolution in the late 19th and early 20th century Manchester went through a period of *“unchecked liberal free trade”*, during which time the economic geography of the current functional conurbation was formed. Rooted in the culture of free trade and the industrial revolution, the unregulated metropolitan management lead by Manchester’s political and business establishment continued until 1972 when the Conservative Government introduced a two-tier system of governance to ‘reign in’ the major industrial metropolises in England. Greater Manchester County Council (GMC) with ten Boroughs was formed in 1974, reportedly as a way for the central government to curtail the power and influence of the Labour-led metropolitan heartlands (Barlow, 1995; Quilley, 2000).

“Territorial rivalries” (Deas and Ward, 2002, p. 118) and fragmentation marred the GMC’s effectiveness from the outset. In 1986 the GMC was abolished, in tune with the continued anti-metropolitan attitude in central Government. Greater Manchester became a group of unitary authorities jointly commissioning statutory functions previously provided by the GMC, including waste management and passenger transport. The sub-regional agenda and joint strategy working, particularly in conjunction with bidding for competitive funds from Europe and central Government, continued under the banner of the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities

(AGMA) which proved to be a resilient form of “decentralised and low key” cooperation (Hebbert and Deas, 2000, p. 84).

As a testament to its resilience, some twenty years after it was created, AGMA would become the basis for formalised metropolitan governance after city-regions became fashionable once more as the “*driving force of economic achievement and key to the delivery of national competitiveness and inclusion strategies*” (Mouawad, 2009, p. 204). Thus Manchester epitomises the “*rhythm to institutional reforms within modern metropolitan regions*” (Hebbert and Deas, 2000, p. 80).

6.2.2 The city-regional momentum 2009 onwards

The ten Greater Manchester LAs agreed to replace AGMA with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in 2011. The shared vision for the city-region is spelled out in the Greater Manchester Strategy (AGMA, 2009). Overall, the incentive for the city-regional drive in Manchester seems heavily reliant on the economic geography of the area. The AGMA Chair Lord Peter Smith was quoted saying “*This is about growth, it is about jobs, it is about investment*” when all ten LAs agreed to back the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (The BBC, 2010c).

AGMA's strategy is formed on the basis of ‘Manchester Independent Economic Review’ (MIER): “*the largest economic study of its kind ever carried out(...) designed to develop a new economic narrative that will better-enable our new governance structures to make right long-term economic choices*” (Emmerich and Frankal, 2009, pp. 96-97). The MIER argued that Manchester ‘punched below its weight’ and needed to make a firm commitment to define its economic footprint on a city-regional basis to benefit from agglomeration, trigger growth and increase competitiveness. The core analysis and recommendations of the MIER are heavily reliant on the move towards a knowledge-based economy and associated competitiveness.

In terms of developing the city-regional economy, AGMA's first priority stated in the city-regional strategy is to “*Expand and diversify the city region's economic base through digital infrastructure*”:

Non-synchronous upload and download speeds and level of bandwidth sharing will limit the potential for high quality video communication. The vital new growth area of cloud computing also increasingly depends on next generation broadband quality. Most importantly it will not provide confidence to

the growing digital businesses in the city region that we have the ambition to remain a key player in the digital age. Business leakage to London and other EU cities will inevitably result.” (AGMA 2009, pp. 35-38)

Therefore, it is clear that the city-regional economic policy is closely aligned with the idea that connectivity drives urban competitiveness (see 2.8.3). ‘Digital’ had already been recognised as a critical infrastructure alongside transport and energy in Manchester’s Multiple Area Agreement the year before (AGMA, 2008). This had been a big breakthrough for the region’s digital development stakeholders.

6.2.3 From municipal socialism to urban boosterism

The city’s image has recently been rebranded as “original, modern” by Peter Saville, Manchester’s Creative Director (Hospers, 2008, p. 232). The essence of the city’s ethos is captured in the Strategy for Greater Manchester as follows:

“It was once said that Manchester had the capacity to make all other cities look old fashioned, if not obsolete; the heat and the intensity of our entrepreneurialism – our radicalism – helped to shape the modern world as we know it.” (AGMA, 2009, p. 3)

Manchester’s radicalism has emerged as a response to a catalogue of major urban challenges. The loss of the industrial manufacturing base meant that in excess of 100,000 jobs disappeared from Manchester between 1971 and 1997, and ever since the surrounding districts have gained more new employment than the city itself. Mainly due to the lack of employment and the housing policy clearing the slums and suburbanising Manchester’s residents, the population in the city of Manchester declined dramatically from 703,000 to 414,819 between 1951 and 2001 (Mace *et al*, 2007). Wythenshawe, one of the two neighbourhoods where citizens were engaged in bottom-up research (reported in chapter 8), was built as such a suburban ‘garden city’ overspill estate.

The introduction of Greater Manchester County Council in 1974 left the city of Manchester ‘handicapped’ due to the city’s geographical boundaries. Compared with other core cities, Manchester’s 11,621 hectares is less than half the size of Birmingham, Leeds or Sheffield (Hebbert and Deas, 2000). As percentage of the conurbation’s population, Manchester’s scant half a million equates to approximately 17% of the total 2.5 million, with most wealthy commuters living in the surrounding more affluent districts (Deas *et al*, 2000). Consequently, Manchester today is the least

socially equitable core city in England measured by the actual level of income earned by its residents versus the earning potential of the high paid skilled jobs in the city. In other words, Manchester has the biggest wage gap of all the eight core cities in terms of the median gross weekly wage paid for jobs that are based in the city and the median gross weekly wage earned by those who live in Manchester (MCC, 2008). This would appear to back the argument that the knowledge economy can be a 'dual economy' where the gap between the high-skilled and low-skilled workers grow (van Winden *et al*, 2007, see 2.8).

The backdrop to Manchester's entrepreneurialism is an era of municipal socialism; ideologically charged local opposition to the Conservative national government (Quilley, 2000). However, the Fordist welfare policies of the radical Council based on 'protecting jobs' were not effective. During the 1980's it became evident that Manchester had to change its local strategy in the face of the harsh economic realities. The return of a Conservative Government to power in 1987 has been identified as a decisive factor in triggering a sea-change from municipal socialism to urban boosterism in Manchester, towards a 'new urban left' agenda (Quilley, 2000, Robson 2002). What became a driving force for Manchester's entrepreneurialism was the realisation that the city did not compete only against other cities in the UK, but against its European counterparts in an increasingly global economy.

The Central Manchester Development Corporation between 1988 and 1996 epitomised the rise of boosterism, attracting in the order of £350m investment into the city centre (Hebbert and Deas, 2000). Apart from addressing the physical elements of the city through landmark conference buildings (GMex), concert halls (Bridgewater Hall) and transport infrastructure (Metrolink), much effort was based on the image and branding of the city as culturally vibrant and cosmopolitan (Robson, 2002; Ward, 2003; Hospers, 2008). There was a growing awareness inside the Town Hall that Manchester's future economy would be increasingly reliant on the 'quality' and the 'brand' of the city, to which the arts, creative and media sectors, as well as the future of IT were seen as a contributing factor.

Wong (1998) presented a typology of local economic development divided into traditional, tangible or "hard" factors, as opposed to intangible or "soft" factors, including quality of life, community identity and image. Wong concludes that whilst economic development practitioners in the Northwest of England put more weight on

traditional factors, the latter *“increasingly provide the cutting edge to enhance local competitiveness”* (1998, p. 718). However, Wong concluded that in the late 1990’s, the case for IT and high-tech in local economic development was largely based on a ‘myth’ in the Northwest of England (ibid), referring to Massey *et al*’s (1992) analysis of ‘high tech fantasies’ and science parks (see 2.4).

The re-building (and branding) of Manchester happened mostly through the manoeuvres of a group of influential people referred to as ‘Manchester Men’ (Tickell and Peck, 1996) determined to brand Manchester as a European metropolis and an attractive business destination. It was in this era of boosterism when the then leader of the City Council, Graham Stringer, *“concentrated decision-making in a powerful central executive where it has remained ever since”* (Hebbert 2010, p 3). Institutional alliances across public and private sectors were formed, in what became to be known as the “Manchester model”; referring to arms-length delivery vehicles securing a “commercial ethos” for local development (Robson 2002, p. 39).

The arms-length model would also become the *modus operandi* for three new agencies taking forward Manchester’s economic development towards the “new” or the “knowledge economy”, as detailed in the next section.

6.3 The emergence of the digital development agenda

The origins of the digital development agenda in Manchester go back to the sea-change identified by Quilley (2000) as the third successive Conservative victory nationally in 1987, and Graham Stringer’s rise to power locally as the leader of the City Council. The Head of what would later be known as Manchester Digital Development Agency recalls:

“There was a naïve view that Labour might have won the election, but it was in fact the third Tory landslide. By 1987, three years into office after a “coup”, the radical new Council had to face the economic realities and look for long term solutions.” (M1)

The spirit which gripped Manchester at the time has been described as follows: *“great ideas are borne out of idealism and desperation – and people, as in the leaders, were desperate at the time. Thousands of jobs were lost and there was fear that this could last for decades. 30-40% unemployment in some areas with no alternative employment or economic structure.”* (M1)

The City Council took the decision to create an economic development unit with a new in-house development team, bringing in people with research skills. The previously non-existent links between the University and the Council were forged then to support Manchester's economic development, including the creation of the science park and closer cooperation with the local universities ultimately leading to the creation of Manchester Knowledge Capital. The City Council, for the first time, understood that culture, creative industries and media contributed approximately 10% to the whole economy, largely based on research commissioned from the Manchester Metropolitan University (then Manchester Polytechnic) (O'Connor and Gu, 2010). Before this realisation, the idea of "leisure" having nothing to do with "real jobs" was deep rooted. Strong partnerships were created among the political, business and intellectual elites with the understanding that *"you have a responsibility towards the city, otherwise it'll become nasty and no-one wants to come here, students or customers"* (M1).

Embracing the potential of leisure economy and determined to raise its profile, Manchester famously (but unsuccessfully) bid to host two successive Olympic Games in 1996 and 2000. The development of "Sportcity" in New East Manchester emerged from the Olympic bidding process and paved the way for Manchester to host the Commonwealth Games in 2002, which has left a lasting legacy in the city (Cochrane *et al*, 1996; Mace *et al*, 2007). The increasing awareness of culture and creative industries were related to wider policy trends across Europe and in the UK from late 1980's onwards linking culture with economic development; a trend also connected to the Information Society (O'Connor and Gu, 2010), and latterly associated with Richard Florida's Creative Class thesis resulting in place-marketing as an urban strategy (see 2.8).

Agencies such as MIDAS – Manchester Investment Development Agency Service (1998) and Marketing Manchester (1997) assisted in Manchester's image-making as a "dense, vibrant European city" (Hebbert and Deas, 2000, p. 86). A few years later the work undertaken by the City Council's economic development unit would produce three 'spin-offs' to take forward three interlinked new strands of new local economic development, which could be broadly defined as culture, universities and Information Technology:

- Manchester Creative Industries Development Services (CIDS) in 2000;

- Manchester Knowledge Capital in 2003; and
- Manchester Digital Development Agency (MDDA) in 2004.

CIDS ‘branched out’ earlier, whilst Knowledge Capital and MDDA followed in close succession. They all had a common purpose, to promote Manchester’s post-industrial economic future in ways that adhered to ideas about a new economy and the value of “soft” economic development. They aimed to unleash some of the creative-intellectual potential within the city to combat the socio-economic decline.

Like the other agencies, MDDA operated within the legacy of the dense ‘growth’ or ‘grant coalition’ networks (Cochrane *et al*, 1996; Quilley, 2000) that made Manchester successful in attracting competitive grants to re-develop the city in ways which adhered to David Harvey’s (1989) thesis on entrepreneurial urban agenda in late capitalism (see 2.8). Whilst bringing major investment and physical transformation to the urban fabric, Ward (2002 p. 24) argues that entrepreneurialism has led to an “*almost paralyzing grip on local economic levers instilled by (neo-liberal) economic globalization*”. Indeed the story of CIDS has been the subject of a case study which argues that the domination of the ‘economic’ over the ‘cultural’ logic ultimately lead to the demise of CIDS (O’Connor and Gu, 2010). Manchester Knowledge Capital has proven resilient in embracing the city-regional momentum. In 2010, the Knowledge Capital launched an “innovation prospectus” positioning the agency firmly inside the city-regional knowledge economy movement. AGMA’s Commission for the New Economy is located in the same building as Manchester Knowledge Capital; Churchgate House in the “Corridor” area on the Southern axis of central Manchester (see Figure 14). The Corridor partnership is in the forefront of Manchester’s knowledge economy agenda, it is also the site of a fibre-optic data infrastructure pilot project, details of which follow in section 6.4.

6.3.1 Radical roots

The City Council’s Economic Development Strategy of 1991 recognised, for the first time, the future of ICTs as a Council-wide strategic objective in the field of employment generation, as well as social and cultural initiatives (Carter, 1997). Manchester is also credited being the first place in the UK where civic networking ideas were put into practice in a publicly-led technology project (Bryan, 1998). Graham and Dominy (1991, p. 222) argue that Manchester’s holistic approach tackling the inherent inequalities in ICT diffusion was “*probably unique in the UK at*

present". The ideas behind Manchester's actions connected to the academic debate on the future of urbanism and information technology, some of which have been associated with "post-urban fantasies" (Graham 2004, see 2.4), conjuring up both dystopian visions of cities becoming defunct through the rise of "cyber-lifestyles", and utopias of radical democratisation through direct "instant electronic democracy" (Carter 1997, p, 139).

The future of IT and the role of cities was thus an agenda taken seriously by the MCC from 1989 onwards in an attempt to find practical solutions and consolidation between the "physical" with "virtual" spaces (Carter, 1997). The new team in the Economic Development Unit and their research collaborators sought inspiration from overseas; the early commercialisation of what would become the internet in the USA, but more relevant social innovations were occurring in Germany and Scandinavia. In Germany, risking prosecution against the monopoly of Deutsche Telecom, an entrepreneurial group exploited loopholes to set up an independent communication gateway 'Geonet' between Germany and London, marketing emails as alternatives to international faxes for businesses at a fraction of the cost. Apart from being questioned by the German government, the radical individual behind the German initiative "*blundered into Shaun Fensom*" (M1) who was in London at the time. Shaun Fensom, dubbed as the "*man who gave Tony Blair his first email address*", has been at the radical end of Manchester's 'digital revolution' and a force behind many of Manchester's pioneering ICT-led community initiatives (MEN, 2009).

The Scandinavian experience, however, inspired public intervention or what could be termed social innovation with the help of modern ICTs. Rural communities in Denmark were faced with an ageing population, archaic business models and young people leaving the area for better opportunities elsewhere. However, these communities were characterised by strong social ties cultivated at local community facilities, such as church halls. The Danish authorities were introducing modern ICTs in these "*familiar and friendly places*" (M1). The economic and social decline in these rural communities struck a chord with the Manchester-based researchers "*we thought that's just like our Wythenshawe, Gorton or Beswick*" (M1). That was the first time the transition was made from rural to urban thinking in using (digital) connectivity as a way to help communities tackle isolation and societal changes. It was mostly through personal connections with (radical) individuals in the voluntary sector "*who were building modems in shoeboxes*" (M1) that the City Council's early digital development

agenda took shape. It has been described as pioneering on behalf of the economic development team in Manchester who viewed ICT as a legitimate idea for local economic development and social inclusion, and “far-sighted” on the Council’s behalf to back the initiatives in the early 1990’s with little proof that it would work in practice (M1; MEN, 2009).

Perhaps logically, the ‘IT stream’ within the new local economic development unit sought cooperation with the Council’s IT Department, the Central Technology Unit (CTU), but the relationship turned out not to be fruitful. *“Historically, the IT department rejected economic development or regeneration ideas on community development, even branding them ridiculous and stupid. Money could not be invested into people, money was for business. That’s when I talked to them about the idea of the value chain”* (M1).

Over the years, there is a sense that the CTU was a continuous risk-averse force positioned against the radical and progressive ideas generated by the digital development team. Despite the poor chemistry with the CTU, Manchester would soon become a widely recognised pioneer in community ICT initiatives supported by external grants. The Manchester Host launched in 1991 offered email, bulletin boards and online databases for private, public and community uses. The Manchester Host was a collaboration between the City Council, Manchester Metropolitan University (then Manchester Polytechnic) and Poptel, Fensom’s employee-owned company accredited to be among the world’s first internet service providers. The technology for the Manchester Host was borrowed from the German pioneers Geonet, and the terminology from the French with ‘telematics’ as the term of choice to describe what was being developed. Ahead of its time, personal computers as a communication tool did not mainstream until years later with the commercialisation of the World Wide Web, which is why a critical mass of users and interaction over the electronic network was not reached at the time (Fensom, 2007). The vision and foresight of Manchester’s digital lobby was remarkable, in the early 1990’s personal computer penetration in the UK was between 18 – 25% with the use of domestic PCs being limited to word processing and games (Bryan, 1998). Graham and Dominy (1991, p. 236) cite the *“visionary work of local officers”* and a *“sympathetic local government office”* together with the partnership with local higher education institutions as reasons for the early successes for the Manchester Host and Electronic Village Halls.

The Electronic Village Halls (EVHs) were originally linked to the Manchester Host with a hope to broaden and diversify its user base. In partnership with local voluntary organisations, EVHs aimed to reach out to groups identified as marginalised in the Information Society; women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and people with low or no qualifications (Bryan, 1998; Carter, 1997; Graham, 1991). Whilst the Manchester Host used the existing narrowband networks, the desire to build a local network of high bandwidth was already present. The EVHs linked to wider aspirations of the Manchester Telematics and Teleworking Partnership between the City Council, Manchester Metropolitan University and the voluntary sector to build a “*digital city*”, supported by a high speed data infrastructure which would create a “*virtual habitat ... where the diversity of users reflects the social and cultural realities of city life*” (Carter, 1997, p.145).

This mid-1990's vision to create a democratic and inclusive metropolitan digital infrastructure did not materialise. Perhaps the elitism of the local universities in their approach to developing a fibre-optic data infrastructure for their own use, or the corporate interests of the incumbent telecoms suppliers and cable operators all had a part to play. Graham and Dominy's (1991) early case studies in “planning for the information city” identify a number of policy constraints, including lack of resources, political backing and knowledge, as well as regulatory and institutional obstacles for municipal infrastructure development. Adding to the list above, echoed by local actors some twenty years later, the lack of a collaborative spirit within the sub-region resulting from competitive grant-seeking behaviour and the inherent fragmentation in the metropolitan area documented earlier in this chapter all contributed to the lack of progress towards a non-commercially operated digital infrastructure.

Other smaller initiatives were successful however. Eastserve, started in 2001, is an often-quoted local initiative offering subsidised computers and affordable wireless broadband for residents in the regeneration area known as New East Manchester. One of the key aspects of the wireless broadband scheme was the low penetration of fixed telephone lines in the community, as well as residents' inability to commit to direct debits or long-term contracts associated with mainstream broadband offered on the market. Grant-funded through the ‘Wired Up Communities’ project, Eastserve aimed to be self-funding within two years but thus far it has not managed to obtain adequate subscription rates to become fully self-sustaining, although it is still operating (Kingston *et al*, 2005; Carter, 2007).

6.4 Digital development goes arms-length

Manchester Digital Development Agency (MDDA) was formed in 2004, in the aftermath of the 2002 Commonwealth Games, with the growing realisation that the future of the digital development agenda, as with the other local economic development functions, would be better served being more “arms length” from the Council. This was described as a “compromise” where the staff would remain on the Council’s payroll, unlike CIDS which became totally independent. However, external funding would be required to cover the basic running costs of MDDA (M1, M5).

From its very inception, MDDA was notionally a city-regional body, partly to adjust to the European policies for metropolitanism and partly responding to the local collaborative model established through AGMA and strengthened during the Commonwealth Games, although the other AGMA authorities have not contributed financially towards MDDA and the links remained to a great extent “on paper”. However, the newly formed MDDA moved deftly within European networks, it was ‘love at first sight’. The European links had been created a decade earlier when the Eurocities network became active in fostering cooperation between European metropolises. This was a natural alliance, for the European agenda was promoting cities through a trajectory of initiatives which suited Manchester’s aspirations, transferring seamlessly to MDDA’s role:

- Eurocities founded in 1986 (Manchester joined in 1992)
- Telecities founded in 1993
- European Digital Cities project (FP4: 1994-96)
- TEN-Telecom project ‘InfoCities’ (1996-98)
- IntelCity Roadmap project (FP5: 2002-3)
- IntelCities project (FP6: 2004-6)
- Telecities become Eurocities Knowledge Society Forum in 2004
- Living Labs Network in 2001
- European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL)

(Carter, 2009)

Manchester was pivotal in the establishment of “Telecities” in 1993 by hosting a conference of Eurocities interested in “telematics”. The conference adopted the “Declaration of Manchester” which laid the foundation for the Telecities network with Manchester at the helm of the Steering Committee (Carter, 1997)

Apart from a close alliance with European cities through past and existing EU projects (see 5.5.3 for more details on European Living Labs and Helsinki), MDDA worked as the main body to look after the city-region's interest in digital development vis-à-vis central (UK) government. MDDA authored Manchester city-region's bid to the government's Digital Challenge competition. Digital Challenge, launched in December 2005, was part of the government's broader technology agenda after the narrowly focused local e-government programme and the "e-enablement" targets had matured in 2005. Launched by ODPM (now CLG), the Digital Challenge aimed to provide an incentive for Local Authorities and their strategic partnerships to drive forward the use of new technologies to meet the needs of communities and citizens (see 3.5.3).

'ONE-Manchester' became the Digital Strategy for Manchester (and collaborating neighbouring authorities), and aimed to put forward a "Digital Master Plan" with the ultimate aim to put Manchester among the emerging "*premier league of super-broadband cities across the world*" (MDDA, 2006, p. 3). In the Digital Strategy the vision for connectivity was based on a flexible approach "*not limited to a single technology*" and the ownership of the digital infrastructure would be based on a cooperative model (MDDA, 2006, p. 28) ONE-Manchester brought together the traditionally separate strands of "e-government"/local government modernisation through the integration of the "Varney agenda" and "t-government" priorities with the field of digital development more often associated with local economic development and social inclusion.

The national agenda and the Digital Challenge competition gave the newly formed MDDA purpose and direction. "*Being shortlisted among the 10 was good, and national developments have followed. Alan Johnson and John Prescott – two Hull MPs – gave the digital agenda nationally some senior backing*" (M1). In 2005, digital development was still a minority interest against the backdrop of the government being "obsessed with targets" (see 3.5.4) in local e-government delivery revolving around the modernisation agenda and public services which all but failed to tackle the economic development/social inclusion side of e-government.

6.4.1 Municipal digital infrastructure: from pipedreams to pipes in the ground

To offer a non-commercially driven municipal solution for digital infrastructure in the city-region has been at the heart of Manchester's digital development ethos for some

twenty years. The municipal model is heavily influenced by widely cited European examples of municipal networks that operate in abundance in Sweden, but also in France, Germany and the Netherlands – representatives from these municipal infrastructure schemes have visited Manchester on MDDA's invite to speak to local decision-makers about the benefits of their chosen approach (M1, M5).

A brief but potent campaign “Manchester Wireless” was launched in 2006 which would have offered free wireless broadband for the entire Manchester city-region. The municipal Wi-Fi grid would have been the largest of its kind in Europe reaching 90 % of Greater Manchester's residents, approximately 2.2 million individuals. The plans were to utilise widely available technology and existing municipal facilities like lampposts, and a low cost open source operating system. The business model of Manchester Wireless would have offered basic internet access without a charge, charging only customers who opted for a faster connection (The BBC, 2006b). Some three years later this state-of-the-art business model was described as ‘freemium’ by Chris Andersen (2009). Freemium has mainstreamed in the ‘online economy’ which builds upon the principle that the cost of processing power, hard drive storage and bandwidth is trending towards zero (see 2.5.2).

Manchester, anecdotally the favourite of the ten short-listed Digital Challenge entrants, did not come first therefore also missing out on the “up to £3m” funding which was made available to the winner (Sunderland). The feeling in the team pitching Manchester's final bid to the judges felt that the CLG panel did not fully embrace or understand the principles included in the vision for Manchester, which included a digital cooperative creating a stakeholder digital economy locally. Again, it appeared that Manchester's visionary approach was ahead of its time and too radical to win support in central government.

Subsequently, the City Council decided not to back the Manchester Wireless project, largely due to lack funding. Thus MDDA abandoned the pursuit of a city-regional Wi-Fi in favour of a different, much more costly albeit also more ‘future proof’ technology; fibre-optic cabling. The Manchester City South Partnership including influential partners such as the two Manchester universities, NHS hospitals trust and the City Council offered a strategic location for the fibre project, “the Corridor”, running south of the City Centre from the Town Hall along the Oxford Road “knowledge corridor” towards Whitworth Park/University campus (see Figure 14 below). Near the south-western border of the Corridor lies Manchester Science Park, founded in the

1990's wave of boosterism, as well as the second largest internet exchange in the country. At the heart of the Corridor is the strategic arm of Greater Manchester's city-regional economy, AGMA's Commission for the New Economy as well as Manchester Knowledge Capital.

The Strategic Vision (Corridor Partnership, 2009, p. 22) anticipates that the Corridor area, which currently accounts for 22.5% of Manchester's GVA, would account for 40% of GVA growth in Manchester between 2009 and 2020. The optimism is based on projected capital investments, estimated at more than £2.5 billion "mostly through private sector finance" (*ibid*, p. 9). As the Corridor already has a high proportion of knowledge intensive industries (43%), the strategy also aims to increase the proportion of local residents employed by the large institutions by 100% – a valuable target given the dangers of the 'dual economy' in Manchester (Corridor Partnership, 2009).

The optimism around the Corridor is based on a strong knowledge-led growth where local residents would also benefit. The idea is that the Corridor is a "catalyst" (M1) that would spark further added value into the area over and beyond its current geo-demographic limits. To achieve that, the model would have to be inclusive where the science park model previously failed (Massey *et al*, 1992).

Figure 14: “The Corridor”



(source: Corridor Partnership, 2009)

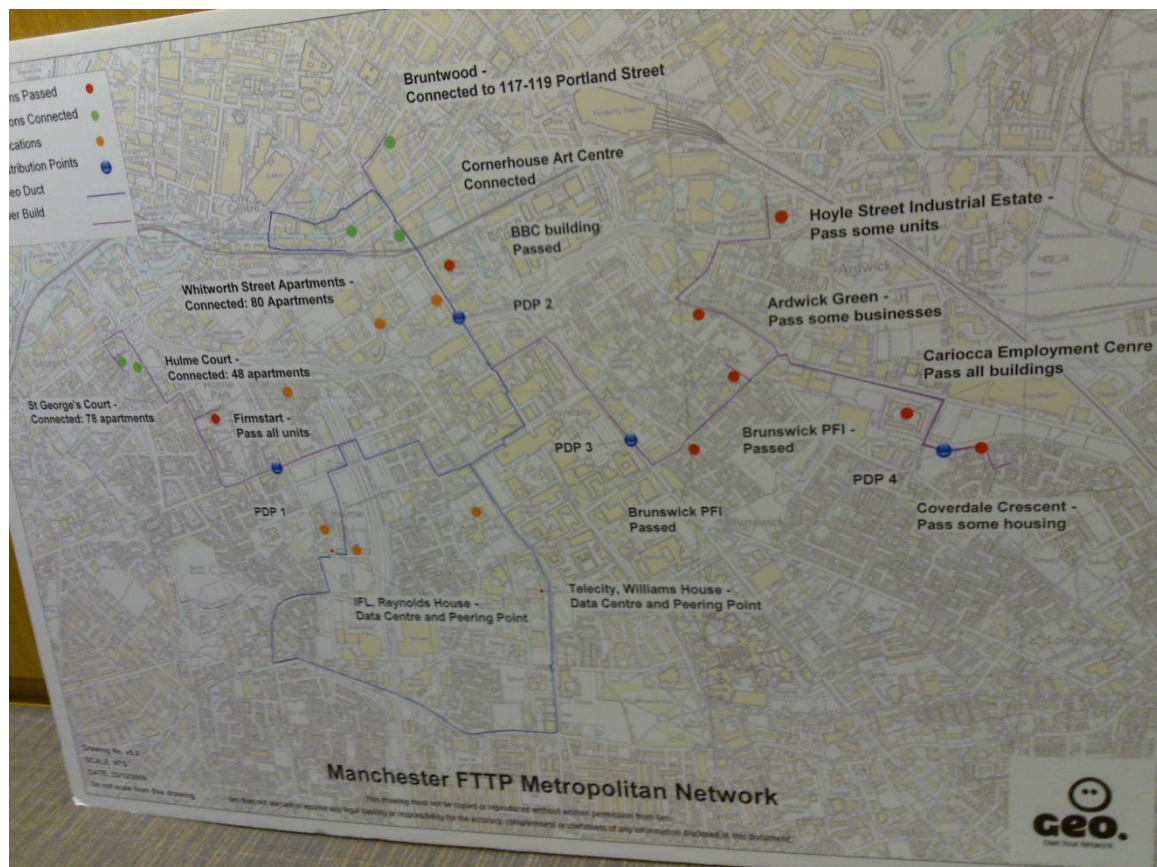
MDDA’s proposals to the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA), to fund the pilot scheme in Manchester were originally met with substantial opposition from the incumbent operator BT (M1, M19). The objections from BT, who did not want competition in the market, combined with *“this kind of attitude which is rife in government that because it’s the private sector they must be right”* (M1) stifled progress for nearly two years, along with careful negotiations with the NWDA. As a

testament to the local determination in face of the RDA's stern position to block the bid, one advocate of the fibre scheme said: *"I am willing to set up a digital cooperative myself, and start selling stakes for businesses and individuals to raise £10 million to get it done, and then build it from there, roll out into the city-region"* (M1).

Finally in 2008, initially £500,000 was secured through the NWDA for the "Corridor" network pilot project, running from December 2008 to March 2011. The figure was later doubled to £1m to reflect the true cost of the implementation. When finished, the Corridor Partnership Network Project aims to connect up to 1000 homes and 500 businesses in the area via FttP (Fibre-to-the-Premises) (M20). See Figure 15 for a map of the network.

"Superfast" (100 mbps) symmetric broadband, covering an area of approximately 4-5 kilometers square would be accessed via contracts end-users make with internet Service Providers who opt to offer services over the open access network (M20). By comparison, Manchester Wireless would have covered 400 square miles and reached an estimated 2.2 million residential customers (for whom the basic service would have been free). The justification for "future-proofing" network capacity, or offering "superfast" broadband, is based on the projections that consumer and business demand for more bandwidth ultimately continues to grow, and that offering high speed internet early offers a competitive advantage (see 5.3.). The international learning on municipal "mega wireless" schemes comes from San Francisco where it was understood that Wi-Fi needs a fibre network in the ground to work. In a large metropolitan area comprehensive coverage is likely to be combination of fibre and wireless, with wireless providing the "last mile" (see 5.3) in areas where cable is not feasible (Daily Wireless, 2007).

Figure 15: Corridor Partnership “FttP metropolitan network”



(source: author, a private display board of fibre deployments in Manchester)

Manchester’s case for the Corridor project was arguably propelled by the publication of two reports; locally the Cushman and Wakefield European Cities Monitor 2007 increased senior level interest and backing for MDDA’s lobby for next generation access. The year after, Francesco Caio’s enquiry into Next Generation Access (NGA) (Caio, 2008) and future competitiveness of the UK was published, commissioned by BERR. Nationally, the debate about Britain’s comparatively poor data infrastructure made it to frontline politics in 2007 after continuous lobbying from bodies such as the Broadband Stakeholder Group. Some advocates of NGA feel that the American presidential election of 2008, and the preceding campaign by Barack Obama’s team which relied heavily on online methods had had an impact in the way the UK government became more serious about “all things 2.0” (see also 2.5.2) (M5).

Caio’s report concluded that whilst there was no case for government intervention nationally to support Next Generation deployment, locally implemented schemes

should be encouraged. In Manchester, the promoters of the fibre pilot said that the Caio report “*saved us*” (M1).

6.4.2 Response to Cushman and Wakefield’s cities monitor

Preceding the Caio report, the Cushman and Wakefield cities monitor caused a stir in Manchester. The following quotes are from a chain of email communications in November 2007, emanating from a senior director within the City Council. At the time, Manchester had not yet been able to secure funding for its Next Generation pilot project and the municipal Wi-Fi plans had been abandoned.

“The recent Cushman and Wakefield report on City Competitiveness placed Manchester at the top end in respect of certain business activities and resources but was critical of our programs on digital development and capability. I think we need to move ahead on this and put out some challenge to the RDA and others on how we take forward a strategy that gets us where we want to go here. I know that you are keen to do this but can I ask for an options paper that I can discuss with [Chief Executive and Leader of the Council] on the investment needed (in terms of type and scale) to get us to:

- a) Comparative parity with the best in UK*
- b) Comparative parity with the best in Europe*
- c) Comparative parity with the best Globally*

I know that there are a million and one imponderables and options but, if we simply take the recognised market leaders in each of the above, might that give us a benchmark for the next stage in developing our infrastructure.”

(M1, via email)

This quote highlights that the City Council occupies itself with the outcomes of international benchmarking in business desirability, such as the European Cities monitor. Similarly, Helsinki’s poor ratings in an e-government benchmarking survey had caused repercussions there (see 5.5.3).

One response to this email, circulated in the network of digital stakeholders in Manchester, questioned the accuracy of the Cushman and Wakefield measure based on subjective perceptions of business men. The quote also refers to the lost potential of the Manchester Wireless initiative and shows how these type of ‘competitiveness indices’ are well positioned to breed shallow place-marketing strategies:

“Well I have my doubts about this survey - only ask big companies? London #1 for languages spoken? For telecommunications? London better than Manchester for quality of life?

It is true that calls abroad have always been cheap in London, but infrastructure for SMEs is no way better than cities where cheap fibre is available.

It's very subjective, so very difficult to know how to improve Manchester image for telecoms in the minds of people who clearly don't know what they're talking about.

I should have thought the way to get through to the people surveyed would be with shameless PR irrespective of whether it's true or not - the 400 Sq miles Wifi will have helped. Some similar PR about the Internet Exchange might also help (although the survey respondents won't know what an Internet Exchange is) - perhaps get some spurious milestone from IFL2/Telecities about number of peering arrangements "Manchester Internet Exchanges now used by XX top ISPs or similar.

Similarly PR about next gen, Manchester determined to be first etc. That is the big one (and message we want to get through to chief exec)"

(M21, via email)

Despite the predominant 'the fast eat the slow' mentality and subsequent race to adopt NGA (see 2.8.3), another Manchester stakeholder is sceptical towards the hype associated with the urgency of 'being left behind' without superfast broadband, based on the existing levels of use:

"Important simple point about infrastructure:

It's not what you've got but what you do with it.

In this way Manchester is in an enviable position. Cities like Birmingham and Bristol may have more actual fibre in the ground, but it has to be coupled with the right catalytic environment to have impact. Connected City does not necessarily refer to the physical infrastructure and the sectors involved. Viewed in the context of Britain's most creative city, massive regeneration, successful ICT strategy, European connections and involvement, make Manchester Britain's most connected city. This, together with 'significant' (i.e. more than enough) infrastructure turns Manchester into a national 'digital engine room'.

Manchester City Council uses 8% of the bandwidth at its disposal. This is the case right across the city (though less extreme in other areas). In Europe we are at 75% over capacity in bandwidth. The message is – it really doesn't matter right now what cables we have where (other than an unfortunate accident). We are Britain's most connected city because we are connected with the potential and the opportunity our infrastructure offers us."

(emphases in original) (M22, via email)

The opinion above is based on all fibre most of which is not open access, therefore not usable for the market. However, the view of Manchester as Britain's most

connected city resonates with its history of entrepreneurialism and the associated growth coalitions and partnerships formed to boost the local economy, even if the analysis of the “Manchester model” is often cynical. The cynicism around Manchester’s development revolves around the stranglehold of the economic logic over alternative, more inclusive or creative responses. One stakeholder crystallises this when discussing bidding for resources: *“unless the economics stack up, you can forget about it”* (M1).

The above quotation, however, highlights one key characteristic of electronic networks; the value of digital connectivity is only gained through interaction between people over that infrastructure. This alternative logic would appear to support a more socially constructed interpretation of technology and its uses, instead of a growth-driven economically orthodox model. However, it echoes Castells’ view that a place gains value from being connected, or networked.

6.5 Summary: sink or swim

While the NGA FttP pilot project was under negotiation, Manchester’s city-regional momentum was gathering speed with the Manchester Independent Economic Review underway. The announcement of Manchester’s pilot status was confirmed by HM Treasury in April 2009, and AGMA launched its Greater Manchester Strategy in the same year (AGMA, 2009). For MDDA, the inclusion of NGA into the Greater Manchester Strategy was a ringing endorsement. The NGA fibre project lifted MDDA’s status, after the ONE-Manchester Digital Strategy had not had as much impact as had been hoped: *“From being a footnote, that [the Corridor] has now become a leading paragraph in everything we write.”* The policy optimism around the Corridor is linked to the potential it brings as a ‘catalyst’ for the knowledge economy in the former industrial metropolis (M1).

The emphasis on high profile ‘flagship’ projects which ultimately serve fewer local residents but attract the most attention is predictably divisive closer to the grassroots: *“It’s all about the Corridor, which can be a little bit frustrating for those who do a lot of good work elsewhere that never gets a mention”* (M5). Others feel that there are not enough resources due to the lack of priorities to support bottom-up community development in neighbourhoods (M12). Some of the frustrations are also to do with lack of progress: *“part of the technology side of regeneration is promoting broadband infrastructure; frankly, this should have been achieved 4-5 years ago”* (M5).

In terms of small-scale or grassroots projects what might be termed 'paddle boats', MDDA have a continued commitment towards their 'radical roots' through involvement in a number of ventures inside and outside the local authority. For example, creating a voluntary/community sector online directory for Manchester, ongoing workshops to local small businesses to teach e-commerce skills, and working with voluntary groups to help them in getting the most out of their IT contracts. MDDA have also started up an Institute for Social Media in partnership with Manchester Business School, and works with social landlords in Manchester to build capacity (M5, M12). All of this work aims to bridge digital divides by mitigating against the three "hierarchies" caused by unequal diffusion of ICTs: in between cities, firm sizes and individual members of the community (Graham and Dominy, 1991).

Whilst the dream of a continental-style, fast municipal digital infrastructure has been a strong influence in the digital development of Manchester for two decades, it is only becoming a (partial) reality from 2011 onwards. The ownership and governance model of the 'passive layer' of the fibre network are still being negotiated, but the City Council is likely to retain a stake in the network (M20).

Whilst having to make the "economics stack up", more socially progressive themes are included in the implementation plans for MDDA projects. In the case of the Corridor, innovation in public service and healthcare is planned over the superfast connection, whilst also the planned inclusion of social housing estates into the fibre network demonstrates attempts to bridge the digital divide in bringing the best connectivity to some of the worst off households. However, as already concluded in chapter 2, physical access to electronic networks has its limitations as a way to combat multi-faceted digital exclusion, whilst skills, motivation, aspiration and perhaps place, too, play an all-important part in a person's prospects for making use of digital connectivity. MDDA are involved in grassroots projects developing and promoting such digital content, for example the Manchester Blog Awards recognising local creative talent, or "Wythenshawe's got talent" online talent competition for Wythenshawe residents.

In practice, what MDDA can and cannot do has a lot to do with its financing; the current local authority revenue source is the 'Working Neighbourhoods Fund' (via the Regeneration Department) which pays for approximately 50% of MDDA's operating costs, which has to be match-funded from external sources. This revenue is bid for and performance indicators negotiated on an annual basis. MDDA then must target

discretionary awards from a number of sources, local, regional, national and European, to make up for the shortfall. In so doing, MDDA have developed specialist skills in European project management having funded its activities through numerous European projects over the years from a variety of EU funding sources including INTERREG (regional cohesion) and Framework Programmes (R&D funding): Intelcities, Virtual Environmental Planning (VEPs), Digital Home Energy Management System (DEHEMS) to mention but a few, many linked to the European Living Lab idea of cities as “innovation platforms”.

In light of these operating constraints, it is easy to see why the agency should attract criticism from the grassroots who perceive MDDA as ‘chasing money’ for flagship projects whilst achieving less in neighbourhoods – it is symptomatic of the entrepreneurial operating environment in which MDDA has to ‘sink or swim’. In terms of urban policy debate, Cochrane *et al* (1996) argued that Manchester has demonstrated how: *“In British policy discourse it has become necessary to talk about growth to get grants”* (p. 1333). This appears to be true also in digital development. The aims of the digital initiatives may be socially inclusive and democratically balanced, but the stranglehold of the economic growth logic over local development grants means that digital development needed to align with the growth agenda, underscored with the threat of “business leakage” in the absence of superfast broadband in Manchester.

Making the municipal infrastructure dream of two decades real, the entrepreneurial urban competitiveness card had to be played, steeped in the agglomeration economics of the city-region, the beating heart of which the square mile of the Knowledge Corridor claims to be. Democratic ideals and social inclusion still remain the core motivation of MDDA, however, the funds available for such projects are scarce.

Castells argued that local government has a key role in balancing the interests of communities against the “space of flows” (international capital). However, digital development is only one side of the technology agenda of Manchester City Council. The next chapter 7 outlines the Council’s experiences and efforts on the transformational journey towards “citizen-centric” and “joined-up” local services with the help of ICTs. A question remains around the interests and experiences of Manchester’s residents, and how they are taken into consideration, when it comes to the “digital city”, the subject of chapter 8.

7 TURNING THE SUPERTANKER AROUND – TRANSFORMING THE CITY COUNCIL

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 7 analyses the attempts to harness technology to modernise Manchester City Council (MCC). This effort was described as trying to “*turn the supertanker around*” by one MCC interviewee, referring to the difficulties in implementing the ‘citizen-centric’ Varney agenda locally (M4). It is concerned primarily with research objectives 2 and 4 (see 4.1.3).

While chapter 6 demonstrated that ‘Manchester’ is a fluid concept, chapter 7 begins with describing the shifting sands of the Manchester Improvement Programme (MIP), the main programme of transformational government in MCC.

The chapter is structured into four sections. First, an introductory note about the MIP, its governance and MCC Ward Coordination is offered. The second part details the efforts of the MIP in transforming customer contact through a programme entitled ‘Access Manchester’. Here, the focus is on three service areas: Environment on Call, the Council’s website and the library service. Third, the problems along the ‘transformational journey’ are analysed, and lastly, the main findings from the research into the MIP are summarised.

7.2 The Manchester Improvement Programme (MIP)

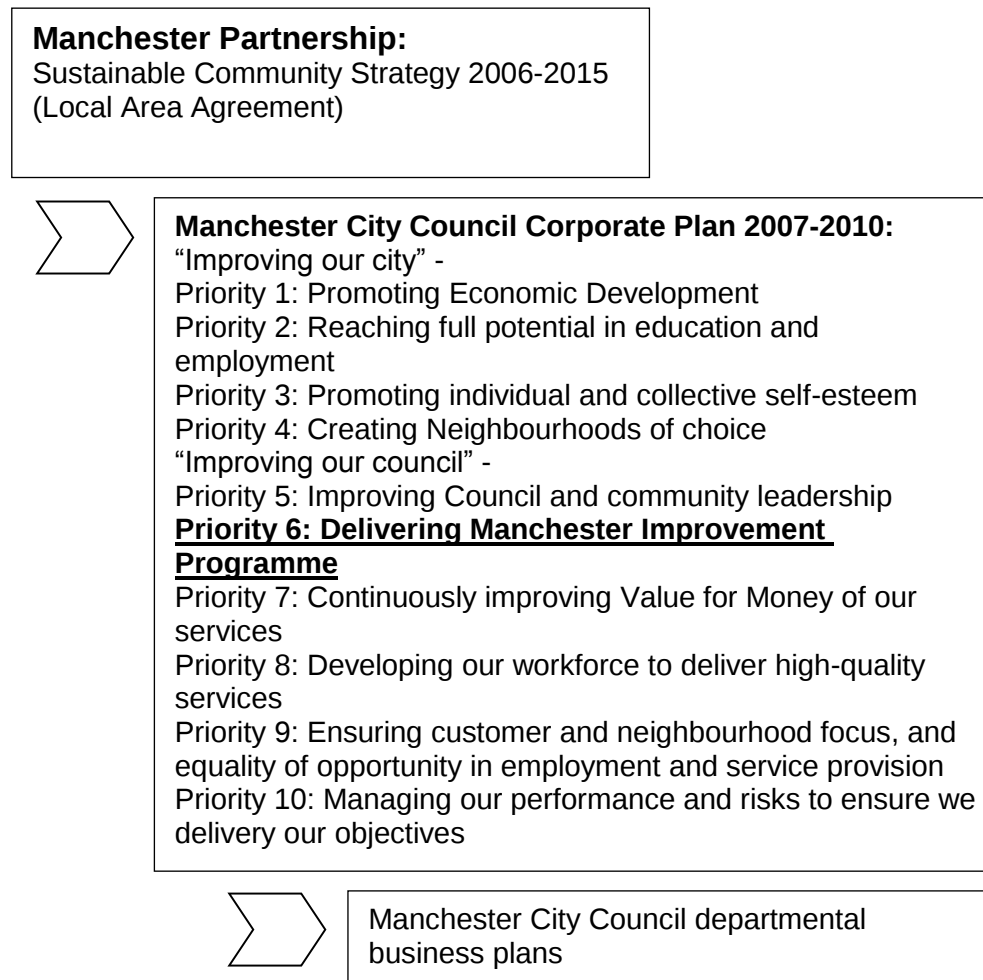
Delivering the MIP was one of ten Corporate Priorities for Manchester City Council (MCC), detailed in the Corporate Plan 2007-2010 (MCC, 2007a). The purpose of the Corporate Plan is to translate the vision of Manchester's Community Strategy 2006-2015 into strategic priorities which in turn are taken forward by managers of local authority services in business planning. The Community Strategy²⁰ was introduced under the Local Government Act 2000 as a statutory measure for each Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in England to deliver joined-up services.

At the time, the main performance management vehicle for local government was the Local Area Agreement (LAA), for which the priorities and targets were agreed by the LSP. Transformational Government does not appear to be a high priority at the strategic partnership level, as NI14 (reducing avoidance contact) has not been included in the LAA, as highlighted in chapter 3.5.4. Thus the efficiency drive and transforming the business of local public services has not been taken forward as a joined agenda shared between the strategic partners, even if the rhetoric of shared services is included in the Local Government White Paper (2006).

Figure 16 below depicts the relationship between the LSP, the Corporate Strategy and MCC's departments and service areas.

²⁰ Renamed the Sustainable Community Strategy following the Sustainable Communities Act 2007

Figure 16: The strategic governance context of MCC and the MIP



(Source: www.manchester.gov.uk)

The MIP, at the time of the fieldwork in 2007-2009, was an evolved and refined version of the Corporate Improvement Programme which was originally masterminded under the Chief Executive’s Department’s Performance Division in 2004-05. The early documentation available on MCC’s intranet anticipated a cumulative cashable savings target of £60 million to be delivered over the projected life span of the programme ending in 2007. While the targets have been revised, the basic principles of the MIP still stand as envisioned in 2005; the modernisation programme would be conducted on a project-by-project basis engaging with service areas through what was termed “Service Improvement Projects” (SIPs) (see Table 12 for the original groupings of the SIPs).

However, it soon became obvious that the scale of the task was much more laborious and costly than anticipated and the MIP was launched in 2006 with less specific programming and an extended timescale.

Table 12: Service Improvement Project original groupings as at July 2005

<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Services included</u>
Apr '05	Group 1	Art Galleries; Traffic Management & Road Safety (inc. MEDC & Highways); Planning and Building Control; Residential Care (Children); Early Years and Play; Home Care; Community Resource Centre; Manchester Advice
Jun '05	Group 2	Care Management; Manchester Adult Education Service; Leisure Services; Central Library; Equipment & Adaptations; Learning Disabilities; Cultural Strategy; Press Office;
Sep '05	Group 3	Education; Crime & Disorder; Regeneration; Residential Care (Adults); Administration; Mobile Warden Service; M4; Family Placement; Quality Assurance; Field Work Services; New Deal for Communities; Capital Programme/Project Management; Economic and Urban Policy Unit; Financial Management
Dec '05	Group 4	Parking and On/Off Street Enforcement; Environmental Health; Street Services (inc. Condition of Public Spaces); Green Spaces; Waste Management; Mental Health; Community Transport; Place Planning and Admissions; Student Support Service; Service for the Visually Impaired; Joint Children's Unit; Libraries Operations; Joint Health Unit; Facilities Management; Manchester Markets; Licensing; Fleet Management; Vehicle Maintenance; Environmental Campaigns; Environmental Strategy; Cemeteries; Street Management; Building Cleaning; Security Services; Town Hall Services; Arboriculture & Horticulture; Procurement (inc. Commissioning); Trading Standards
Mar '06	Group 5	ICT; Transport Policy; Asylum & Refugees; Communications; Youth Service; Marketing Events and Tourism; Revenues and Benefits
Jun '06	Group 6	Homelessness Service; Strategic Housing; Emergency Planning; Audit & Risk Management
Sep '06	Group 7	Democratic Services; Private Sector Housing; Valuation & Property Services; Physical Disability Services
Dec '06	Group 8	Personnel Services; Organisational Development; Policy; Performance; Supporting People; Building Maintenance; Legal Services
Mar '07	Group 9	Housing Management; City Works; Catering Services; Registrars; Public Conveniences; Library Theatre

(source: MCC 2005a)

7.2.1 MIP organisation and finances

This research took place at a time when the MIP was undergoing major strategic realignment. A new director for the programme was recruited in 2008, who set about to implement a new approach. Notwithstanding the ongoing changes in the MIP, the existing) framework for the programme has the following six “key themes”:

1. Access Manchester
2. Back Office
3. Integrated Children’s services
4. Integrated Neighbourhood services (including Adult social care)
5. Integrated Information Strategy
6. Building Performance

The focus here is primarily on Access Manchester, under the auspices of which Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Corporate Contact Centre and Website Improvement Project have been taken forward. Access Manchester is the MIP’s strategy for developing a *“one council approach for customer contact, be it via website, telephone, face to face, members’ surgeries and libraries as access points”* (M8), thus it represents the ‘citizen-centric’ element, the ‘golden thread’ of the LGMA.

The MIP has annual core funding in the order of £5 million, funded through the Council’s mainstream revenue budget. The £5 million is aimed to *“keep up the organisational capability to drive business change”* (M3), meaning that the cost of any new technology, for example, is not included in the MIP budget. The programme finances are described as *“quite complex”* (M3) but the basic principle for raising revenue for any new technology implemented as a result of a Service Improvement Project (SIP) is that the City Treasurer gives a loan to the service who repays the investment through cashable efficiencies. After the loan is paid off, future efficiencies can either be returned to the service if a bid for growth has been approved, or recouped entirely by the Treasurer, depending on each individual case (M3).

The MIP budget therefore covers the cost of staff (and overheads) who work on multiple Service Improvement Projects, and other related strategy work, as “change experts” (M2). The role of the MIP is akin to a consultancy service with most recruits coming from a “non-council” background. In two years since 2006, the MIP team has

grown from 10 to 63 permanent and contract staff, as a result of increasing demand from the Council. Interviews with MIP staff suggest that they see themselves as a “different breed” from typical local authority personnel; a distinct culture is forming inside the MIP (M6).

The programme is governed by the MIP Board of chief officers chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive; the membership also includes the Director of MIP and the City Treasurer. The role of the MIP Board however has been extended beyond the programme – apart from monthly meetings to monitor progress with SIPs, as part of the Global Revenue monitoring process the MIP Board receives monthly information on spend against budgets from all departments to ensure they “*maintain a balanced budget position*” (MCC, 2007b, p. 7).

As implied earlier, the overall targets and timescale for the MIP have been revised substantially. From the interviews it became clear that the only well understood fact about the savings target was that it had changed, most officers who were asked said it would be best to check with the new Director. The overall savings target had not been included in official reports to Scrutiny Committees or Global Revenue Budget monitoring to the Council’s Executive. Instead, an annual target was mentioned; in 2007/08 the target was £15.5 million, reported together with actual cumulative savings achieved since the launch of the programme (approximately £22 million as at 2008, according the Director of MIP).

The targets have shifted to the extent that it is difficult to ascertain the actual current commitments. An independent audit report of the MIP quotes a cumulative savings target is £35 million to March 2011:

“At the inception of the MIP, in 2006, an aspirational target for savings from improved procurement and reviews of major services were assessed at around £50m over the three years to 31 March 2010. In the most recent Medium Term Financial Plan, the savings target timeframe has been extended by a year to 31 March 2011 and the cumulative savings target has been confirmed as £35m.” (Grant Thornton, 2009)

Given the constant changes, any detail on targets or even programmes and policies of the MIP therefore should be understood primarily as a snapshot of the consensus at the time.

7.2.2 Ward coordination

Throughout this chapter and next, reference is also made to Ward coordination within MCC. Since it was first introduced in 2000, the purpose of Ward coordination has been, in short, to make 'area working' a reality by joining up Council departments and their key service partners to focus on the 32 wards of Manchester. The guiding principle was to ensure that local needs would be at the heart of service provision and that regeneration activity was coordinated with mainstream services and the Council's strategic partners. A Ward Coordinator and Ward Support Officer organise Manchester's Ward coordination activities, including meetings held locally and a ward newsletter (M13, M14).

Community engagement and neighbourhood focus can be detected as corporate priority 9 in Figure 16 above. This was influenced partly by the shift in the local government performance framework which once used to be driven by Best Value, the Comprehensive Area Assessment focussed instead on neighbourhoods and communities. Community engagement, as noted in chapter 3, was a consistent theme the LGMA since 1997.

Ward coordination has a key role in the 'place-shaping' agenda, or connecting the Council and its services with citizens and communities. They also have experiences of the MIP, which are highlighted later in 7.3.2 and 7.4.

7.3 Access Manchester

As described in chapter 3, the government's vision for local e-government was driven by the achievement of the so-called "priority outcomes", including the 100% e-enablement targets for local services. In Manchester, the handover of the legacy of the local e-government programme took place in 2006 when the outstanding (national) "priority outcomes" (see 3.5.2) were transferred to the MIP, these included the full roll out of CRM as well as the development of a new MCC website (MCC, 2006a). SAP was the chosen technology in Manchester to enable CRM. The CRM logic is underpinned by the Corporate Contact Centre model, i.e. channelling customer contacts through one central system (regardless of the method or channel of contact).

SAP CRM is intended to give the contact centre agent a single view of the customer:

“An immediate view who the customer is, where they live, a history of all their transactions with the organisation, what services they may require in the future, what services they are eligible to receive, what their individual requirements are, how they like to be contacted” (MCC, 2006b, p2)

The launch of the MIP in 2006 coincided with the commencement of a contract for the delivery of the “SAP integrated enterprise resource management system” (MCC, 2008a, p.). SAP (Systems Applications and Products) is a German-based company, according MCC it is:

“One of the leading Enterprise Resource Planning systems employed globally across a wide range of industry sectors [...] SAP seeks to bring the organisation together as one in the management and reporting of its data, strategic, operational and financial, the standardisation and automation of business processes and the implementation of a single IT infrastructure.” Furthermore, “success in achieving these benefits is dependent on the organisation’s ability transform and become one organisation” (MCC, 2007c, pp. 9-10)

The previous government claimed that there are two main benefits to the customer from the single view; having to inform the Council only once of any changes to personal circumstances, and a simplified route to access all Council services through a central point of contact according to the Varney Review (HM Treasury, 2006b). Simplified customer access is the purpose of Access Manchester.

7.3.1 Environment on Call – a phased approach to CRM

As far as local government CRM goes, Manchester was a relatively late adopter as the National CRM programme was already launched in 2003. Salford, Manchester's neighbour across the river Mersey, was one of the Beacon Councils of the 2003 national CRM programme. In MCC, CRM was first piloted in the new Environment on Call (EoC) contact centre in November 2005, described as Phase 1 of CRM rollout. EoC had been launched the year before in June 2004 as a contact centre for environmental and operational services of the Council. These types of services have universally been the first area of Council services to be transferred successfully to a contact centre model, as highlighted by the research results of the National Take-up Study reported in chapter 8. Phase 1 was a pilot and blueprint for Phase 2 when all services within Environment and Operations were to be transferred to the CRM model operated via EoC. Ultimately, in CRM Phase 3, the MIP intends to bring all front office contact from Council services into “a single corporate approach” (MCC 2006b, p.3).

EoC, although already a contact centre, underwent significant organisational and cultural changes in order to deliver CRM: extending opening hours from traditional office hours to 8am – 8pm, and training staff who used to take calls for their old area of service to becoming ‘generalists’ to be able to take calls on behalf on an increasing number of services. This approach of generic customer service agents builds on the assumption that 95% of all contacts can be resolved at the first point of contact with a generic agent. The remaining 5% are “complex queries” requiring a specialist from within the specific service area (M11). These local figures are somewhat higher than the recommendation in the Varney review where 80% of customer contacts in a contact centre model were estimated as resolvable on the first point of contact.

Environment and Operations as a service area is compatible with this two-tier model as the service requests are relatively simple. By contrast, Social Services currently operate four tiers of expertise for resolving queries, it is easy to see the resistance and the complexities arising out of the efforts to bring all Council services under one system of customer contact. This results in “one size fits all” resistance against the MIP within the more “change-resistant” services (M8). Yet much of the change towards a customer centric approach is driven by the past failures of Councils (and other public services) to share information and act upon it, alongside inadequate resources to meet demand, as concluded by the Victoria Climbié Inquiry (House of Commons Health Committee, 2003).

Some of these areas described as more “change-resistant” often come with an unknown and unreliable method of scoping volume of latent demand – the number of people failing to come into contact with the service due to lack of capacity (M8). Latent demand can be a hidden iceberg; according to the Varney review, some LAs have reported a 300% increase in contact volumes as a result of introducing well signposted access channels, most typically a contact centre.

The unforeseen difficulties with CRM halted SAP implementation, resulting in a review of SAP. The SAP report states that Phase 1 had “*comparatively little business change involved [which] coupled with existing business processes [of Environment on Call] resulted in a fast stabilisation period and generally improved customer feedback*” (MCC 2007c, p. 12). Consequently, SAP CRM implementation stalled “*in part because of significantly higher levels of business change than those seen previously*”,

resulting in unanticipated implications for both time and cost. The problems are discussed in more detail in section 7.5.

As mentioned above, apart from SAP CRM, the Council's website was identified as one of the priority outcomes in the 2006 handover from Implementing Electronic Government to the newly launched MIP. The City Council's website is a central piece of customer-focussed technology; the next section focuses on the Website Improvement Project.

7.3.2 The Website Improvement Project

Manchester City Council (MCC) launched a new website in 2007 as a result of the Website Improvement Project. Interviews with the service improvement staff confirm that the new website was launched with a sense of urgency in a bid improve the Council's corporate image through a "look and feel" approach, rather than embarking on a major overhaul which would have required fundamental business process changes within the existing departments, rendering the Website Improvement Project beyond its time and budget constraints (M6).

The urgency was rooted in the fact that Manchester's website was deemed out-dated, a whole industry had emerged around local authority websites with SOCITM (Society of IT Managers) benchmarking and promoting good practice. Manchester's old website did not bode well with the city's 'original, modern' image as one of the major cities in the UK with an international reputation (M6).

Given the scale of the task, the Website Improvement Project had to choose a few core strategic priorities and "easy wins" that could be delivered to timescale and budget. These were:

1. new content management system making web authoring simpler
2. new (Google-powered) search facility
3. improving the website's accessibility (e.g. disabled users)
4. creating a new "look and feel". (M6)

A new Content Management System (CMS), Jadu, was procured and implemented within six months. In the course of the implementation, approximately 10,000 pages were migrated to the new CMS, 100 staff underwent the "train the trainer" course and

a further 200 end users were trained in half-day sessions. From the staff perspective, Jadu facilitates “non-technical” content management, therefore empowering staff to make easier use of the web channel for informational purposes. Previously, manual HTML updating was more laborious and time-consuming (M6).

An example of how the new CMS has influenced the work of some frontline officers was discovered in conjunction with the Levenshulme neighbourhood case study. The Ward Support Officer spoke about how she (and some of her colleagues in other parts of the city) had recently received training for Jadu. Consequently, the ward coordination web pages have received a face lift with much more up-to-date ward-focused information. The new CMS had sparked an informal “core group” of frontline Ward Support Officers with an interest and ability to work on the development of ward coordination content on MCC web pages. Whilst the content and style of the ward coordination pages still varies “*quite a lot*” for different parts of the city, the Ward Support Officer feels that the new CMS has enabled the front-line officers to develop the public front of ward coordination (M14).

The number of web authors in MCC remains high, approximately 300 individuals contribute to the website in ways which are not coordinated or streamlined with “*existing silo attitudes*”. This is something that the MIP sees as a potential problem. The new website successfully improved its SOCITM ranking, but it is still “*some way off the cutting edge*” of LA websites (M6).

The new MCC website was also awarded the “BT Total Broadband Online Excellence Award” for the best Local Authority website. Ironically perhaps, one senior manager expressed surprise at the success: “*The web is poor. It’s very bureaucratic, bad quality information, with links not working. We won an award, don’t know how. Shallow criteria perhaps*” (M2).

Further development of the MCC website “*remains on the to-do-list*” of the newly recruited website manager (M15). However, there remains concern about the capacity of the web team, according to one digital stakeholder:

“*The web team is under-resourced, the manager has three people, two of whom are redeployed - he needs something like a team of 15 skilled people*” (M5).

For the sake of comparison, the central IT team in Helsinki had grown from 15

full-time staff in 2006 to 26 in 2008 to support the delivery of the IT strategy.

7.3.3 The web channel and CRM – the missing link

It is clear that Manchester is not satisfied with what the improved website offers, as another overhaul of the website is intended to penetrate deeper into the “business architecture” and transformation programme (M2).

The outstanding challenge relates to the front office, which simply put means the point of contact between the citizen and the Council. All CRM implementation thus far relies on a “middle-man” (contact centre agent) to broker the contacts made by citizens, regardless of the channel. This middle-man approach is against the grain of the disruptive nature of the internet. Disruptive technologies, specifically the internet, have triggered a proliferation of self-service models disrupting entire industries (travel and bookshops to mention but a few, see chapter 2.5.2 on disruptive technology). Governments or the public sector in general, have been slow to respond to such technological innovations.

The first iteration of the Website Improvement Project could not stretch to the proper integration of the self-service channel with the CRM system to create a true “end-to-end” process for the live element of SAP CRM operating through the EoC contact centre. This was not due to a lack of awareness. The MIP did identify the link between CRM and the Council’s website from the outset. A scrutiny report commenting on the MIP progress with Phase 1 of CRM in EoC states that:

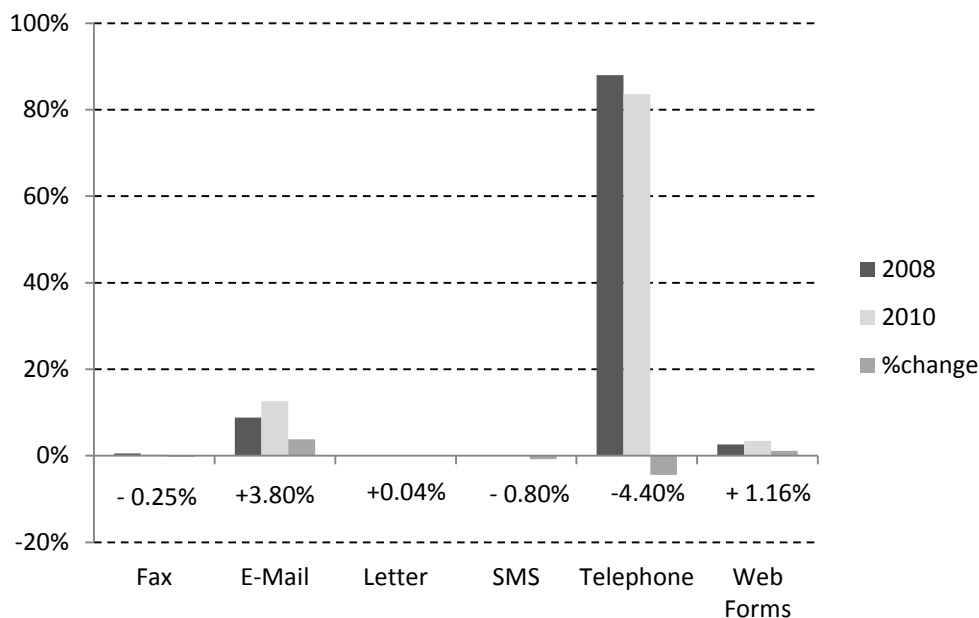
“The requirement for transparency and customer access to information which the Committee has highlighted going forwards will, in the Director’s view, be best achieved by developing the Council’s website. MIP is developing a new website for 2007 and a second phase of that project will necessarily be to develop a system where customers can access the record of their requests for service” (MCC 2006b, p. 6).

The background to this report was a request from the scrutiny committee to issue letters to all customers who contacted EoC to advise them of the status of their request, which in the view of the MIP, would be too costly. Instead, a “customer information system attached to the Council’s website” (*ibid*, p. 7) would meet the transparency requirements expressed by elected members.

Indeed the vision communicated via reports to scrutiny in 2006, prior to the Website Improvement Project, talk about “self-serve ability”, requesting services and tracking progress without the intervention of the contact centre agent. However, two years later interviews with EoC staff indicate that the web channel is marginalised under the current CRM model and that promoting it is primarily seen as something that belongs to the “*website team at the Town Hall*” (M30). This creates a problematic rift in the ownership of the web channel's further development. Given also the concerns about the capacity of the small web development team outlined in the previous section, it is unlikely that the web channel's marginalised position changes without a much greater investment in the capacity of the web team or a change in the ownership of the issue.

There are some obvious disincentives regarding the development of the web channel at EoC at present. For example, the current CRM model deals with all the service requests over different channels on an equal basis, costed at £2.65 per transaction (M11) (this is what service areas get charged by the contact centre). The Contact Centre Manager explained that in reality, telephone calls however are quicker to resolve than emails or web forms, as with the latter two the contact centre agent has to read through the information provided by the customer and input the service request manually into SAP. The average call duration is 4.40 minutes, whereas an email (or web form) takes an average 6 minutes to resolve. The demand for web forms is currently low, but the volume of emails is said to rise steadily. Also, the launch of the new website is argued to have resulted in more webforms being used than previously (M11). The volume of all EoC contacts over a three-month monitoring period is presented in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Volumes of EoC customer contact by channel, January – March 2008 and 2010



(source data: EoC 2008, 2010)

Figure 17 illustrates that the combined volume of ‘e-channels’ (emails and web forms) is 11.4% in January-March 2008. Given that year 2007 is when the use of online social networking ‘exploded’ in the UK, coinciding with a radical reduction in the consumer price of broadband (see chapter 5.3.1), channel statistics were obtained for the same monitoring period January-March in 2009 and 2010 to see if there was a significant change reflecting the increased use of the internet overall. A marginal gain in e-channels can be detected with the combined volume of emails and web forms totalling 16% in both 2009 and 2010, gained mainly from telephone contacts which remained at 84% for both years. The use of web forms remains low, at 3.4% in 2010. Overall, the citizens of Manchester overwhelmingly favour the telephone over e-channels, congruous with the national trends reported in chapter 3.5.5. Citizen demand for e-government is explored in greater detail in chapter 8, where the results of a national volumetrics study are reported, as well as the analysis of MCC’s Best Value Survey 2007.

Whilst the current CRM model does not incentivise further take-up of e-channels, the economic incentive is strong for encouraging the development of the web-enabled automated channels under the Access Manchester theme. According to the MIP: “*the cost of each transaction in the contact centre averages at £2.65, but if we can get the end-to-end integration, it’s something like 8 pence*” (M3).

The MIP Head of Delivery contends that the new content management system and the re-launched website offer the right infrastructure to start developing self-service channels, *“and that’s precisely what the Customer Services Programme has within one of its key aims”*, nevertheless, there are some *“linkages missing in the chain”* (M3), these ‘missing links’ are explored in section 7.5.

Next, some bottom-up experiences of MIP are outlined to illustrate how the MIP is received outside the core delivery team.

7.4 Green shoots

Whilst the current chapter lists many problems and barriers to transformation, this section highlights some small gains that have been made with the diffusion of technology under Access Manchester.

In terms of citizen engagement, MCC has been openly criticised for its centrally controlled approach. This opinion has been voiced by elected members, officers and also by academics (as argued in chapter 6.2). With the exception of Wythenshawe Area Committee, Ward coordination is currently the only governance mechanism involving residents and focusing on neighbourhoods within MCC. Frontline regeneration officers were interviewed in both Wythenshawe and Levenshulme to discover how the corporate customer focus was translating to the work at the coal face of customer contact.

7.4.1 Sharing spatially sensitive information

Within Ward coordination, two examples were identified where the corporate e-government agenda had delivered indirect benefits to community engagement. The new Jadu content management system empowered frontline officers to remodel Ward coordination webpages, as detailed earlier in 7.3.2. Secondly, the diffusion of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) has made performance management information more transparent and accessible to residents:

“I remember, doing those (ward) newsletters at the start. We’d have to put in performance statistics. The only information you could get was on bin emptying. Nothing else was available. If I was to ask now, I’d be swamped with information. Nobody kept them, or maybe they did but not in a way that they could say there you go, give that to the residents. Now it’s all there, I can get stats on anything. Also previously, we might get, say, Manchester statistics,

then maybe area. But now virtually every department could give them at Ward level, that's changed in the last four years.” (M14)

The staff in the frontline of community engagement seem to experience essentially the same obstacle as the MIP itself. Within the MIP it was felt that departments held back on releasing information for 'corporate use' – an attitude the MIP hoped to reverse. The MIP's vision of corporate data sharing, however, is still a closed information system between 'professionals' and therefore not opening up to the world outside, as called for by advocates of 'government 2.0', such as Leadbeater (2008) (see 2.5.2).

“That's still a cultural thing, I think departments would have to get over. Most of them probably still think that it is sensitive information, because they see it as internal information.” (M14)

Across the observed parts of the City Council, the elite involved with the MIP, operational service delivery in EoC, as well as Ward Coordination, none had crossed the threshold of using the internet to engage with the public in any other way than through transactional services or using it as a unidirectional channel to disseminate edited information. At the root of the problem appears to be control and fear of being “inundated” with feedback if the “floodgates” were opened.

Similar fears were familiar in Helsinki to those officers who promoted opening up channels of participation on the Internet, but in their experience those fears have been unjustified: *“You might get a flurry of activity first, but it tends to peter out and stabilise quite quickly”* (H2). The key question here is having the capacity to deal with customer contact, which can become a real burden for those involved if the Council itself is not responsive and lacks mechanisms to respond to bottom-up feedback. In Helsinki, the examples of successful top-down online participation were bespoke 'issue-driven' campaigns, such as controlling wild rabbits (see 5.5.4).

7.4.2 Manchester Libraries

Manchester Libraries had small but nevertheless innovative experiences in using online methods to engage residents. As part of Access Manchester, selected libraries were piloted as access points for online Council services in Miles Platting, Newton Heath, Wythenshawe and North City. Libraries as access points promoted the online channel with a bespoke web interface designed for the pilot libraries where all transactions were no more than “three clicks away” (M4). The pilot libraries reported

over 1000% increase in usage/visits to MCC website from their PIAPs, compared with 42% increase from non-pilot libraries in the same period. Furthermore, libraries had entered the sphere of Web 2.0 using Facebook, blogs, Twitter and Flickr to interact with customers. The Head of Libraries felt that the MIP and the corporate culture could be at times prohibitive and bureaucratic, and that some of the more innovative experiments had to be done “outside the machine” (M4).

Overall, the online use of library services is growing fast, with 32.8% of all transactions being online in 2008/9, online reservations having increased by 20% in the preceding 12 months. Libraries had also launched a fully automated “end-to-end” service called 24h library which had been “a big hit” with customers (M4). Compared with the lacklustre web development with EoC, Libraries seem to be much more successful in using electronic channels for customer engagement and online service delivery. One reason for this could be that of course web development and end-to-end processes are much easier to implement in the context of one focussed service area (Libraries), than as part of the “machinery” of the whole council and its 700 services. However, this still does not explain entirely why EoC, with a portfolio of reasonably compatible environmental and operational services had not managed to deliver a customer facing online interface. The lesson from the Libraries is, however, that if such an interface was developed, there could be demand for it.

There appears to be a natural link between libraries and new media which results in a more imaginative use of the internet than typically within local government. In Helsinki, too, the library service was identified as among the most popular and early adopters of online services for customers. Notably, Manchester Libraries’ approach to electronic services, albeit part of the wider MIP, involved a direct relationship between the service and citizen-customers (rather than introducing another layer to the service, the corporate contact centre). Apart from having more immediate electronically mediated links with citizens, libraries are also community-based with 98% of residents living within one mile radius from a library (see 8.5.4). It appears that this kind of dual approach of physical local and online presence has been successful. Furthermore, libraries thus far have evaded the privatisation/arms-length delivery models which have colonised many former council services such as leisure and housing, resulting in fragmentation and less direct contact between the Council and local residents.

7.5 The root of the problem

In the face of “*huge disappointments*” (M2) and lack of progress, the MIP has attempted to understand the problems it has encountered. These missing links in achieving the corporate vision of a customer-centric, lean organisation as understood by the MIP are summarised in this section.

7.5.1 Technology is the easy part

To reflect back briefly on the previous chapter 6, throughout this research it became clear that the Manchester Improvement Programme (MIP) and Manchester Digital Development Agency (MDDA) did not have a great deal in common, despite their technology-focussed agendas. Following a reflexive period within the MIP and the appointment of the new Director, a mutual recognition of potential collaboration has been acknowledged, if not acted upon directly.

Despite their differences, there is one common theme which unites the MIP and MDDA: the troubled past relationship with the Central Technology Unit (CTU). The CTU was described by the MIP as “*a millstone around our necks*”. As part of the wider strategic realignment of the MIP, the organisational responsibility for the CTU was transferred under the Director of MIP in an attempt to “reign in” the unit. In terms of risk, the inability of the CTU to deliver the required IT solutions was identified as one of the highest risks in the new IT Strategy.

However, it would be presumptuous to blame the CTU for the lack of progress in Manchester's customer service transformation. The CRM strategy was not 'owned' by the CTU even if they had a key role to play in implementing the technology in a more practical sense. The CRM programme has been described as having under-achieved its aims by quite a margin, albeit some “quick wins” had been gained, such as the launch of Environment On-Call Phase 1, and the Council's website. The new Director of MIP agrees that there had been “*huge disappointments*” due to lack of progress since the start of the programme.

The reasons for this lack of progress are deep-rooted, most project managers felt that “*technology is the easy part*” (M8) and turning the supertanker around had more to do

with cultural change: attitudes, skills, “old ways of working” and the “mind-set”; in other words “the people”, or the workforce.

The people were resistant because of the underlying message with the Service Improvement Projects is that *“ultimately you’ve got to employ less people if you do things more efficiently”* (M6). It is therefore obvious why staff feel anxious about the efficiency-led approach, even if a ‘veneer’ of customer focus is applied on the surface. In conjunction with the contract centre project, one manager described it as “playing the customer card” with difficult members of staff. Whilst EoC is the only service area where SAP CRM has been implemented to front office, this was not without *“a huge fear factor”* and resistance among staff in respect of the cultural changes involved: *“They don’t want to cooperate because they think that’s my job on the line, or my boyfriend/girlfriend’s/ husband’s job on the line”* (M11).

The terms “dead wood” and “dinosaurs” came up frequently during the interviews (M2, M11, M4, M6). It is noteworthy that the fieldwork was conducted prior to the focus on the public deficit nationally and the austerity measures, and yet the main concern among staff appeared to be job security. The view at senior level was clear: *“We’ve got approximately 30,000 staff, 10% need to go maybe. The important thing is to get the best of the 90%. Our managers need to lead by example”* (M2).

The cost of redeployments following Service Improvement Projects was highlighted as a new risk in the Council’s Global Revenue Budget Monitor in July 2007 (MCC 2007b): *“Consideration is being given to the treatment of costs relating to staff needing to be redeployed as a result of MIP projects. This cost will net off savings in the short term and present a risk that year end savings targets are not met”* (p. 7).

If relations with staff are difficult, from the point of view of citizens, the question should be asked is MIP asking the staff to comply with the right things in the first place, what is this transformation trying to achieve?

7.5.2 Strategic mismatch and managerial rationalism

Achieving a ‘single view of the customer’ is tremendously challenging for a local authority. In 2008, *“there exists no comparable local authority that has yet succeeded, but most are working towards the same vision”* (MCC, 2008b, p. 11). The MIP

leadership identify the culture around data sharing and ownership as one of the main barriers: *"It should be Council data first, then the department, but people feel the opposite at the moment"* (M2). From this, it can be noted that the MIP is involved with a power struggle, but it is not citizens or elected members who are at the heart of the empowerment.

The MIP relies heavily on officer-led leadership, its governance board only consisting of officers and the suggested new strategic leadership are all non-political appointments. However, the elected members themselves recognise what they could bring to 'champion change':

"IT development has not really been upmost on members' minds. We used to have a councillor called Cath Wright a few years ago; she put a lot of personal effort into it. There's nobody doing that, we don't have lead members as champions for areas of service. We just have 10 executive members who do everything and scrutiny committees that are marginalised" (M23).

The marginalisation of elected members is symptomatic of managerial rationalism (Danziger *et al*, 1982, see 3.2.1).

The Council managers' priorities have been influenced by the decision to invest into a computer software programme in the hope that it would be accepted and a culture change would follow. The decision to invest into SAP CRM in hindsight seems naïve. The strategic vision and case for the investment was backed up by what could be described as a marketing video about an imaginary council called "Rummage" produced by the company selling the product:

"It was a self-defeating exercise. It gave managers the idea that as soon as we've implemented the first part of SAP technology we're going to have this wonderful fully integrated front office – nothing could be further from the truth." (M3)

Therefore, it seems that apart from the difficulties with the CTU described as a *"millstone around our necks pulling us down"* (M2), it appears that the MIP had another perhaps heavier millstone around its neck; the costly SAP contract. The decision to invest in SAP had cast a shadow over the entire modernisation programme. This multimillion pound investment into technology had to be justified by delivering an "aspirational" target of cashable savings (see 7.2.1): *"The Head of MIP was charged with achieving these challenging savings, because the Council had invested millions of pounds into SAP technology and part of that deal was that these savings would appear"* (M3).

After the implementation had been stopped, a strategic review of SAP took place. The most crucial gaps in organisational capability, according to the SAP review, were identified as follows:

- Strategic leadership in ICT and information;
- IT implementation skill;
- Commercial supplier management skill;
- Control of business design and change:

“If IT is to be successful, particularly IT like SAP, the organisation needs to change the way it works to get the best of that IT. But what you often find is that the IT is implemented but the business still works the way it’s always worked” (M3).

The last point about the control of business design and change, and the organisation continuing to work in an unchanged manner after implementation is typical of managerial rationalism (Campbell, 1996, see 3.2.2). When end users do not feel valued, or indeed if they do not agree with or understand the strategic context, compliance is not likely to occur voluntarily. This insight about staff still leaves open a question about citizens, which is discussed next.

7.5.3 Lack of (shared) understanding about citizens

One of the problems of the MIP is the lack of consistency around terminology, or language, which probably reflects the lack of clarity in the corporate vision for customer contact. One elected member criticises the constant changes and lack of clarity, as well as the ethos of Manchester as a heavily centralised authority:

“We change things sometimes just for the sake of it. And we don’t realise how much we confuse people. By that I mean that we don’t for example have a city planning officer, we don’t have a city engineer. We have fancy named departments that are meaningless to most people and, you know, then we wonder why we don’t interact. In terms of participation and engagement Manchester is the worst city of any city in the country.” (M23)

The view of Manchester as a centrally controlled authority corroborates with the discussion in chapter 6 around the general evolution of the Manchester conurbation and the concentration of power within the hands of a core team inside the Town Hall. This leads the discussion to the final part of evidence reviewed in chapter 7, the MIP and its relationship with customers.

The term “lack of understanding” covers a multitude of sins. The view held within the MIP is that technology *per se* is ill-understood, it “frightens” people because they do not understand how it works, ultimately leading people to “ignore it” (M3). This view supports Campbell’s (1996) analysis of managerial rationalism which can lead to non-cooperation and resistance by user groups.

Most importantly for this research, the MIP and the Council more widely have failed to develop a shared understanding and vision of their relationship with citizens in the context of transformation. Highlighting this, one frontline officer from Ward coordination explained:

“I don’t think we’re very good at communication. Some people come along (to Ward coordination) because they’re told to. They don’t really understand area focus, customer focus, or service improvement. Plus I don’t think we’re as joined up as we’d like to think we are. We’ve got MIP, we’ve got a whole corporate service improvement team, we’ve got a whole corporate customer complaint service, Ward coordination, all doing its own thing separately. We should use the technology from MIP to implement service improvement, we should be using the same information that we get from complaints to inform what the issues are for residents and that should be joined up with ward coordination. I don’t think we’ve got it right yet.” (M13)

This lack of horizontal cooperation, in other words departments working together to resolve the cross-cutting ‘people-centred’ issues that are at the heart of the transformational government agenda, is a stumbling block also experienced in the EoC contact centre implemented as part of Access Manchester. Ward support officers often end up ‘trouble-shooting’ on behalf of residents:

“EoC is supposed to make it simple, one stop shop, but the departments often don’t respond. Oncall services are very good at what they do best, standard queries. When there’s something off the beaten track that’s where it all seems to fall apart” (M14)

This opinion was echoed by a contact centre agent:

“We log the query on the system, but there’s nothing we can do to make the services respond better. It can be very frustrating for us and the customers. We have no way of telling where things are up to, and sometimes we can’t even tell if it’s been dealt with or not, if they don’t update the status on the system.” (M30)

The frontline officers working in Ward coordination and community engagement are at

the coal face of trying to coordinate services around an 'area focus' as well as 'customer focus', as called for in the place-shaping agenda:

"It's rather ironic, when you think about it. Ward coordination should be about linking departments, but we're not doing it. What we are doing is linking the service departments to an extent, but we're not linking the support departments, like MIP and complaints. We run parallel systems and things get lost." (M14)

"We haven't even agreed in the Council what is a complaint, and what is a service issue. We need a definition, some issues are just queries." (M13)

This relates to the notions of customer contact and service improvement, or in the language of LGMA, the 'place-shaping' role of local government, and citizen (or customer) centricity. The comment about a lack of definition of customer contact also links with the problems highlighted in the National Take-up study (see 8.2); there is a lack of consensus around what constitutes a 'customer contact', how to capture it, and most importantly, how to learn from it. If the organisation has not understood these core issues first, it is unlikely that a piece of new technology will help to resolve any of this confusion.

It appears therefore, that the corporate technology agenda has not achieved a great deal by way of joining up services, whilst it may have increased the efficiency of resolving standard queries. What seems even further away is the kind of 'holistic thinking' around what technology and service improvement could achieve by focussing on the 'people-centred' problems in many of Manchester's neighbourhoods, captured currently by the 'parallel systems' where the information is at risk of getting lost.

The lack of understanding around the Council's relationship with citizens is rooted in the 'foggy' strategic context of the Manchester Improvement Programme:

"Today you go around different departments and they still do not quite understand what Access Manchester is all about, it's an unknown. They can be forgiven for thinking that for they never had a strategic document which outlined that vision, brought it all together" (M3)

This confusion could be partially rooted in the fact that the average local authority offers in the order of 700 different services, and each service has different accountabilities to Whitehall:

“It’s very, very difficult to get such a diverse organisation to buy into a one size fits all operating model. Because of the different statutory requirements, the way they report to government is different, the way they go about delivering their service is different” (M3)

Therefore, the lack of cooperation and confusion locally is also rooted in ‘vertical joining-up’ (Cowell and Martin, 2004, see 3.4) and the way in which Whitehall sets the policy agenda and determines outcomes locally.

7.6 Summary: the customer is king?

The customer in the language of LGMA most often refers to the citizen, but it could be a business or any other organisation coming into contact with the council. Sir David Varney concluded that whilst there has been a proliferation of the term ‘customer’ under the government reform agenda, citizens rarely see themselves as customers in various life situations coming into contact with public authorities.

It is evident that Access Manchester, now called the Customer Services Programme, has struggled largely because there has been an air of myth around what customer-centricity really means and how to achieve it corporately. In 2008, a senior figure within the MIP contended that customer focus (referring to citizens) used to be “*absolutely zero*” before the strategic review of the programme (M2).

The experience from Ward coordination also shows that the dominant culture within MCC is not sensitive or even compatible with a bottom-up approach to learning from people-based issues. Instead, the corporate systems were designed to build customer profiles where issues would be categorised and monitored according to their compatibility with the corporate systems. Non-standard issues had a tendency to “get lost in the system”.

7.6.1 Customers, choice and privatisation

Outside the MIP, Ward councillors without executive portfolios are often critical about the culture and ‘customer focus’ inside the Town Hall:

“There is a big cultural issue there which is part of the problem. The last thing people in the Town Hall want to do is to deal with actual people’s personal problems and issues, the very last thing, right at the back of the pile.” (M23)

The MIP aims to increase the efficiency of the council as a business, whose customers (i.e. citizens) expect competent delivery of services at a competitive price. The following quotation from a manager in the Chief Executive's department epitomises "the cultural issue inside the Town Hall" mentioned above in respect of using technology for more openness and participation:

"From my personal experience I think the efficiency argument washes. I don't buy the engagement argument. I think residents see the council (certainly when they contact us about services) as a utility and don't want to 'engage' in the same way that they don't want to 'engage' with BT. The pressure on us to push this engagement (e.g. parts of the white paper), are distracting, pointless and wasteful." (M19)

The above view corroborates with Bang and Esmark's (2008) propositions about governance in the Network Society. An increasing market rationality applied within the public sector leads to accountability through competence judged on the efficiency of transactions by citizen-consumers, rather than the moral worth or trustworthiness of the administration (see section 2.7).

As concluded in chapter 6, the attitude in government that the market delivers optimal outcomes is deep-rooted also in the MIP – this is congruent with the core assumptions in the LGMA (see 3.4). As part of service improvement, the MIP looks into whether the market can deliver the service, and as a consequence some services have been transferred to the private sector. The idea on the private sector "doing things better" is based on the notion that they are more effective in managing performance, motivating people and dealing with "destructive staff" (M2 and M3). However, the Council has struggled with managing relationship with the private sector, such as with the SAP contract.

When asked about the 'customer philosophy' of the Council, in particular whether it borrowed too much from the private sector, one senior manager of the MIP posited that: *"Tesco must be doing something right"* (M7), arguing that the customer service culture instilled in the leading commercial businesses was not necessarily contravening what the Council should try to do with their services. This is rooted in customer 'choice'; a central theme in LGMA. Within MCC, there is a view that 'choice services' (e.g. libraries designate themselves as such) do better than those services who face no competition from alternative providers or do not otherwise have to "attract customers" (M4).

An elected member, however, disagrees with the customer designation of citizens:

"I don't talk about customers, I talk about citizens. Citizen participation is the key thing, rather than customers which is about paying your gas bill not about engaging in political issues in a community. Language is quite important; being a customer is something very different to being a citizen." (M23)

The MIP programme has relied chiefly on two guiding principles; firstly efficiency, and secondly, "the customer card". The "customer card" has little to do with a bottom-up approach, it is a top-down conceptualisation of service improvement where "putting customers at the heart of everything we do" means that customer contact is channelled through a standardised "corporate system", the success of which is measured through performance indicators on customer satisfaction and transaction cost. The expectations for reduced transaction costs (through cashable savings or improved efficiency) are high whereas "customer satisfaction" in the words of one Head of Service in the Chief Executive's department is *"a function of low expectations"* (M19).

The 'customer-focused' language of the MIP has an aversion towards the term 'citizen'. At the time of this research, the Information Strategy (MCC, 2008) and ICT Strategy (MCC, 2009b) were the first to be available outlining the MIP's new strategic direction. Neither mentions the word 'citizen' at all. The new Customer Services Strategy of the Manchester Improvement Programme (MCC, 2009a) recognises that the customer is also a citizen, and that often the City Council's customer has no choice in the service provider. Nevertheless, MCC's customer-focus is justified by making a comparison with customer service standards in leading private sector businesses, saying that all Council staff should *"value users as customers in the same way that high performing commercial organisations do"* (ibid, p.7).

The underlying conviction that the market "does things better" coincides with the designation of the citizen as a customer of public services. This trend endorses a 'marketplace democracy' (see 3.4.1) where the customer satisfaction survey and 'choice' mechanisms are prioritised over the ballot paper and democratic engagement.

This 'customer is king' approach has undermined local authority staff who feel threatened and under-valued, therefore resistance is an inevitable outcome. A socially constructed approach to technology implementation (Campbell, 1996) would address

these main anxieties in the workforce rather than use technology as a 'scapegoat' to enforce desired behaviours among a reluctant audience.

7.6.2 Reflections on managerial rationalism

The MIP as a programme feels detached or arms-length from the Council with a separate culture and identity. The programme is under the control of an elite group of MCC officers. Whilst the new strategies speak of a more balanced approach to the previously savings-centred programme, the MIP Board has become a strategic body that reviews all spending within the Directorates of MCC, which speaks for more not less control over finances.

One of the main problems of the MIP has been a lack of understanding of the "strategic context". The "lack of understanding" within the service areas and directorates could be a direct result of the lack of clarity within the programme itself or the wider national policy agenda which it tries to implement locally. These uncertainties are reflected in the anxiety that staff feel, thus the programme is faced with opposition on the ground.

The difficulties in achieving CRM are not unique to Manchester. The 2003 National CRM Programme acknowledged that *"The full CRM concept still remains a mystery for most local authorities and the full scope in terms of strategic service issues, cultural and organisational transformation issues and associated skills, ICT and other enablers, are not fully understood or sufficient capacities evident leading to fragmented or low take-up"* (Salford City Council, 2003, p. 2). This often results in difficulties in choosing the right technology to facilitate CRM, and understanding exactly how and where CRM adds value to the local authority's existing work and future aspirations.

Reflecting back on the literature review, it is argued that many of MIP's problems are rooted in its underlying managerial-rationalist philosophy (Danziger *et al*, 1982; Campbell, 1996, see 3.2). The implementation of the "optimal plan" is thought to resolve the existing problems, and that organisations are *"arenas of rationality where logical strategies consistently turn into actions that improve organizational efficiency"* (Campbell, 1996, p. 103). Such plans fail to consider the social and political context within which they operate.

This social and political context, or the corporate culture within MCC, has been described by one elected member as follows:

“It is a step change attitude in the Town Hall as to how it wants to engage with citizens and be there as an accountable organisation to citizens. Unfortunately, sometimes in Manchester the leadership thinks it is more accountable to the private sector and looking at private sector partnership rather than actually to the electorate of the city” (M23)

There would appear to be a cultural blind spot towards participatory and bottom-up programmes in Manchester. Thus the MIP portrays the hallmark characteristics of managerial rationalism in local government; it tends to serve the interest of the modernisers (officers) over elected members and it breeds a “reinforcement politics” in relation to citizens which focuses efforts around increased efficiency and technology supporting routine administrative tasks and bureaucratic control over the customers of public services.

The effects of a reinforcement politics suggest that new technical tools serve the existing dominant social forces in an organisation. The introduction of the Jadu Content Management System empowers some web authoring Council staff to make use of the web as an informational tool, but fails on “participatory e-government” to refer to the e-government typologies introduced in 3.3.1.

It is striking that the MIP has not evaluated MCC’s corporate approach to the internet more generally. It is argued that the attitude towards the internet remains controlling and risk-averse which further stifles bottom-up innovations:

“The Council’s firewall is Draconian, security aspects dictate how the web gets utilised by staff. Web is part of younger generation’s life style, communication on a daily basis. Are they going to stay in that job where their web use is so limited? What does that mean to the skills base of the LA workers? What message does that send to staff? ‘We don’t trust you’. There are tons of people who don’t even have access to the net at work.” (M5)

Apart from turning a blind eye to empowering MCC staff with basic access to the internet and email, there is little evidence of the interests of community development (or participation) and lateral thinking around the opportunities of the internet as a strategic tool for tackling the problems experienced by a large proportion the Council’s customer base. The closest mention in the new ICT Strategy to the community is in conjunction with Ward coordination: “with access to good quality information and

intuitive technology, neighbourhood working could be developed in conjunction with customers” (MCC 2009b, p. 23). The strategy illustrates this with an example of multi-agency intervention on anti-social behaviour, combining agency data with customer insight. Expectations however are carefully managed in this respect:

“Information has never been managed or used in this way before and so the effort required by all parties and the time taken to deliver this element of the strategy should not be underestimated” (ibid, p. 23).

It appears that when it comes to “turning the supertanker around” from the citizen-perspective, MCC’s transformational journey has only just begun.

8 CITIZENS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

8.1 Introduction

Whilst chapters 6 and 7 focussed on the supply side of technology in local government, chapter 8 presents evidence from the demand side; citizens and neighbourhoods. Research objectives 2 and 4 are addressed in this chapter (see 4.1.3).

The first part of chapter 8 considers quantitative evidence of citizen demand for electronic channels compared with traditional channels (face-to-face, telephone) in the local government context in England and in Manchester. The second half includes qualitative evidence from citizens and frontline officers. The aim here is to probe further citizens' incentives/ disincentives to use electronic channels. The main sources of information are two citizens' focus groups and interviews held in the case study neighbourhoods, Wythenshawe and Levenshulme. The overall volume of people contacting the Council is scoped on the basis of a customer survey as well as a customer contact monitoring exercise at Manchester Libraries.

The chapter is divided into four sub-sections. First, secondary analysis of the National Take-up study is reported. Second, more quantitative evidence is presented from Manchester, with secondary analysis of the Council's Best Value Survey. Third, the qualitative evidence from two Manchester neighbourhoods, Wythenshawe and Levenshulme, is presented. Finally, a summary of the key points from the bottom-up research concludes chapter 8.

8.2 Speaking volumes: National Take-up study

8.2.1 Introduction

As concluded in earlier chapters, e-government take-up in the UK is low compared to the rest of Europe, and disproportionately so when the e-government offer and sophistication here is ahead of many European nations (see 5.3.1). The level of overall demand for local e-government in England is gauged in the Take-up study conducted by IDeA esd-toolkit in 2006-2007 (see 3.5.5). The study was commissioned by DCLG to champion channel management in local government and to boost citizen demand for more cost-effective e-services after the maturation of the Implementing Electronic Government targets in 2005 (see 3.5.2). The study was based on volunteering local authorities submitting relevant data on volumes of customer contact made for a set basket of environmental and operational services over three channels in from September 2006 to January 2007: web, telephone and face-to-face. It also differentiated between five different types of contact/interaction: applications for service; provision of information; making payments; booking venues and courses; and collecting revenue.

Despite initial interest from 60 local authorities (LA) to take part in the study, only 24 submitted any data, which was of varying quality and consistency. The final report released by esd-toolkit concludes that LAs are not well positioned to monitor volumes and therefore unable to respond to the challenges of the Varney Review (and e-government agenda):

“It is apparent [from the feedback] that many people in local government who, one might consider to be key stakeholders in this agenda, still have little, if any, concept of the drivers for change as set out in the White Paper, the Varney Review and elsewhere” (esd-toolkit 2007, p. 7)

Furthermore, the lack of incentive to monitor or promote take up of electronic channels is identified the “biggest single barrier” to customer-centric electronic service delivery:

“The lack of any incentive to local government to actually undertake measurement of take-up predicates against the drive to increase take up of e-services. This is considered the biggest single barrier to take up and allows a laissez faire approach to service delivery to survive.” (ibid, p.11)

Interviews with EoC in Manchester suggested that one of the main reasons for the poor turnout for the study was the lack of a global definition of customer contact, resulting in only those LAs submitting data whose definitions broadly mirrored those used in the study (M11).

8.2.2 Analysis and findings

The raw data from esd-toolkit was transported to SPSS from the original Excel spreadsheets and recoded for the purpose of secondary data analysis. Descriptive statistics (in Appendix 1) confirmed that for any meaningful cross-channel comparisons, the services with the least variation in the number of submissions across all the three channels (telephone, face-to-face and internet) needed to be identified and selected. The following five services met the desired consistency and volume criteria: abandoned vehicles; noise pollution; missed domestic refuse collections; bulky waste; and fly tipping.

In terms of the different types of interaction “applications for service” and “provision of information” accounted for 85% of the data submitted, therefore only these two types were considered in the analysis. According to the e-government typology presented in chapter 3.3.1, these could be described as “transactional” and “informational” e-government. It is perhaps worthy of noting here that participatory e-government falls outside the interest of the Take-up study, which is congruent with the lack of policy priorities in this field generally, as concluded in chapter 3.5.4 when no LSP had included NI 14 (reducing avoidable contact) in their LAA.

The percentages of total volumes in Figure 18 are based on the aggregated accumulative total number of cases over the monitoring period.

Figure 18: Volumes of “applications for service” and “provision of information” for five local authority environmental services in England by channel (telephone, face-to-face, internet) September 2006 – January 2007.

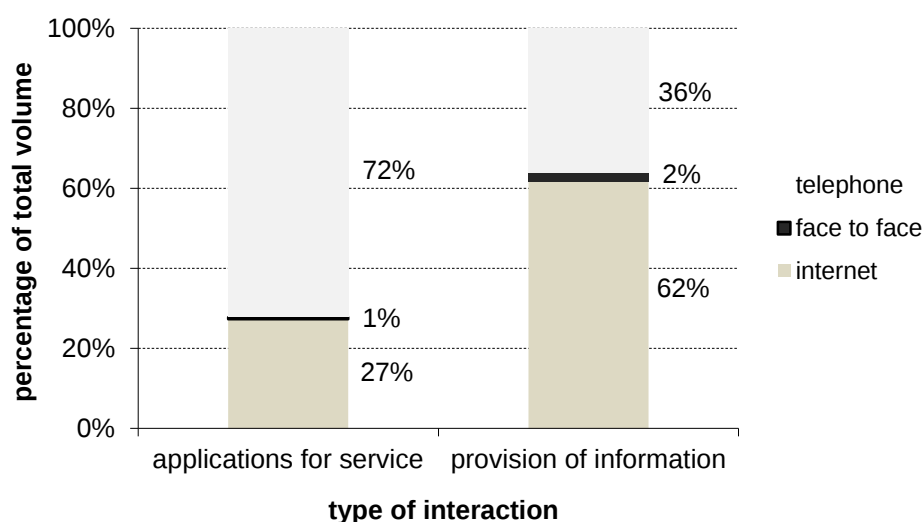


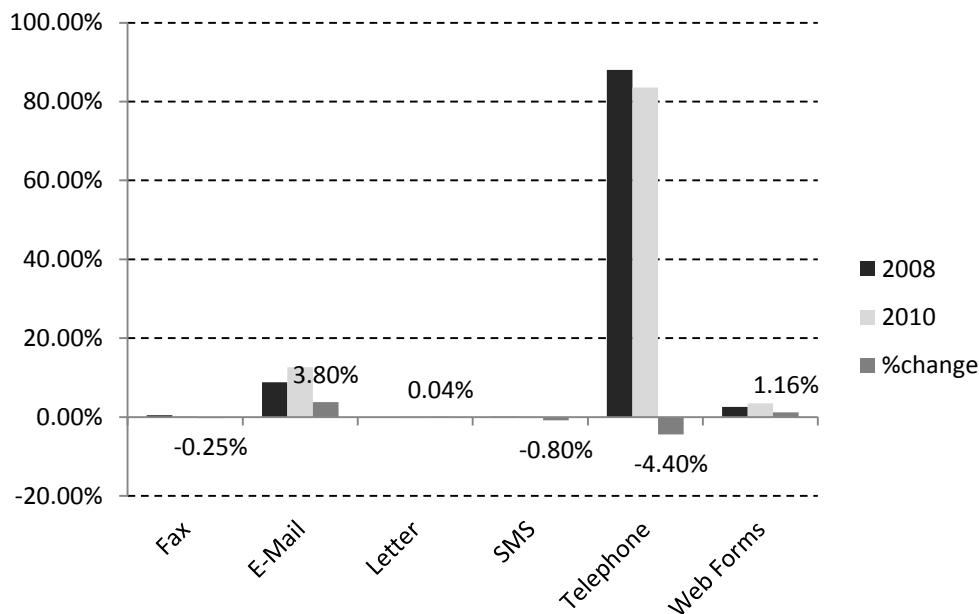
Figure 18 suggests that whilst the telephone is still the most popular channel to request environmental services, the web seems to have surpassed the telephone as the most popular means of acquiring information about these services. The vast majority of service applications for these five environmental services are made on the telephone (72%). This result confirms the DCLG (2006) view that the UK population seems to have entrenched attitudes towards using the telephone when contacting the local authority.

The more surprising finding was the relatively large proportion of information enquiries for the same set of five services online (62%). It therefore appears that a large number of customers, after finding out about a service via the internet, proceed to make a telephone call to request that service.

8.2.3 Comparison with EoC in Manchester

MCC registered interest with the National Take-up study but ultimately did not submit data, in part at least due to the perceived inconsistency in the way customer contact is defined across the sector (M11). Environmental and operational services dominated the list of most consistently reported services in the Take-up study, therefore the results lend themselves for comparison with Manchester’s Environment on Call (EoC) contact centre. The percentages below in Figure 19 are for a three month period in January – March 2008 and in 2010:

Figure 19: Volumes of EoC customer contact by channel, January – March 2008 and 2010 with percentage change



Although the types of services for which customer contact is being monitored are similar between EoC and the national esd-toolkit study, this is not a like-with-like comparison. The esd-toolkit study omits contacts by fax and SMS, and the face-to-face option is not available in EoC. Furthermore, EoC data does not differentiate between the different types of interaction (informational/transactional).

The combined volume of emails and web forms totals 11.4% in Manchester in 2008; this is significantly below the national average of 27% using the web channel for transactional purposes. The difference appears to be accounted for in the higher take-up of the telephone; 88% in EoC, 72% in the National Take-up study. Compared with 2010, use of electronic channels (email and web forms) has increased to a combined 16.4%, mainly through people migrating from the telephone to email.

Next, Manchester City Council's Best Value Survey data is analysed to discern what can be learned from residents' channel choices.

8.3 Manchester City Council's 'Listening to your views' Best Value survey 2006/07

8.3.1 Introduction

The aim of this section is to test whether there are statistically significant relationships between Manchester residents' channel choices and a number of independent variables. The variables were chosen on the basis of the literature review in chapter 3. Previous e-government research has identified a number of key cleavages for digital divides, most prominently age and socio-economic status. Tolbert and Mossberger (2006) and Welch *et al* (2005) link e-government use with higher levels of trust and citizen satisfaction, therefore perceptions on the quality of the interaction, trust, and efficiency are worthy of a closer look in the Manchester context.

The Best Value Survey was undertaken by Ipsos MORI North on behalf of Manchester City Council (MCC) in 2007. The survey included 4527 respondents across all wards in Manchester, which provides an adequately large sample to make wider inference to the city as a whole. The sample has been drawn by random methods, every household having an equal chance of being selected.

8.3.2 Data analysis

The data set was explored using crosstabulation, the results of which are presented graphically in Figures 21-29. Where a strong relationship between the variables appeared to be present, 95% confidence intervals were calculated to verify whether there is a real difference between the observed values or whether the results could be explained by the natural variation in the population. The confidence intervals were based on the Standard Error of the percentage:

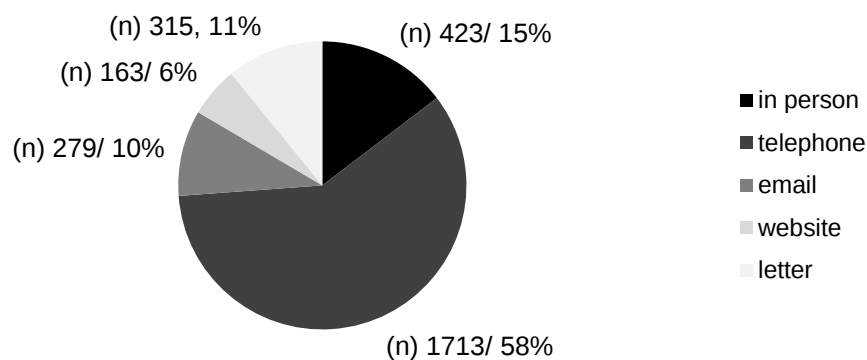
$$SE(\%) = \sqrt{\frac{\text{sample}\%(100 - \text{sample}\%)}{n}}$$

Where n = sample size, and 95% confidence intervals are calculated by multiplying $SE(\%)$ with 1.96 (the standard deviation or the distance within which the true value lies from the observed value at 95% confidence). The confidence interval margins are presented in full in Tables 1–6 in Appendix 2.

Firstly, Figure 20 below confirms the anticipated overall preference towards the

telephone, but at a lower rate (58 %) than in EoC volumetrics (88 %). The count (n) in each category is shown as well as the percentage to give an indication of number of respondents, as this affects the confidence intervals, or the SE(%). The smaller the sample size, the greater the standard error resulting in wider confidence margins and thus making a real difference between the results more difficult to prove.

Figure 20: “n” and % of respondents across the monitored channels



8.3.3 Opinions on the quality of the interaction, trustworthiness and effectiveness of the Council

In this section the following variables were compared against channel choice (results significant at 95% confidence marked with an asterix*):

- Satisfaction with the final outcome of the contact (Figure 21)*
- Is the Council efficient and well run? (Figure 22)
- Is the Council trustworthy? (Figure 23)*
- How well does the Council keep residents informed about the services and benefits it provides? (Figure 24)
- How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the opportunities for participation in local decision making? (Figure 25)*

The results are presented in the graphs below.

In terms of overall satisfaction, the telephone and web channel result in a higher level of satisfaction with the final outcome of the contact than face-to-face, email or letter. The results are significant at 95% confidence, see Figure 21.

Perceptions of efficiency were not significant, although the web channel yielded highest satisfaction (55%), see Figure 22.

In terms of trustworthiness of the Council (Figure 23) the web channel has the highest percentage of agreement and smallest percentage of disagreement with the statement "Is the Council trustworthy". Tested for significance, web users showed least dissatisfaction with trustworthiness, with 95% confidence.

Furthermore, the website appears to be the only channel where a larger number of residents think they are "very well informed" of "fairly well informed" rather than giving a negative assessment; the split being 48% positive, 47% negative (Figure 24). Email results in the most adverse balance with 39% positive and 58% negative. The split between the other channels is as follows: in person 42/51%, telephone 44/51%, letter 47/47%; however, these differences cannot be confirmed as statistically significant.

In terms of satisfaction with opportunities for participation (Figure 25) the results are poignant. Whilst the other questions thus far seem to have resulted in more favourable outcomes with the web channel, the web yields the lowest number of "satisfied" (10%) and the highest number of "dissatisfied" (31%) residents. Those who had had face to face contact with the Council felt most satisfied about their opportunities for participation in local decision making (31%). Tested for significance, those who had made contact in person were more satisfied than those using email, website or letter. Moreover, the satisfaction rate of website and email users is significantly below all the other channels as regards opportunities for participation. This finding corroborates with the conclusions of the literature review in chapter 3.6 that opportunities for e-participation have been largely ignored by governments.

Figure 21: “Satisfaction with the final outcome of the contact” (recoded)*

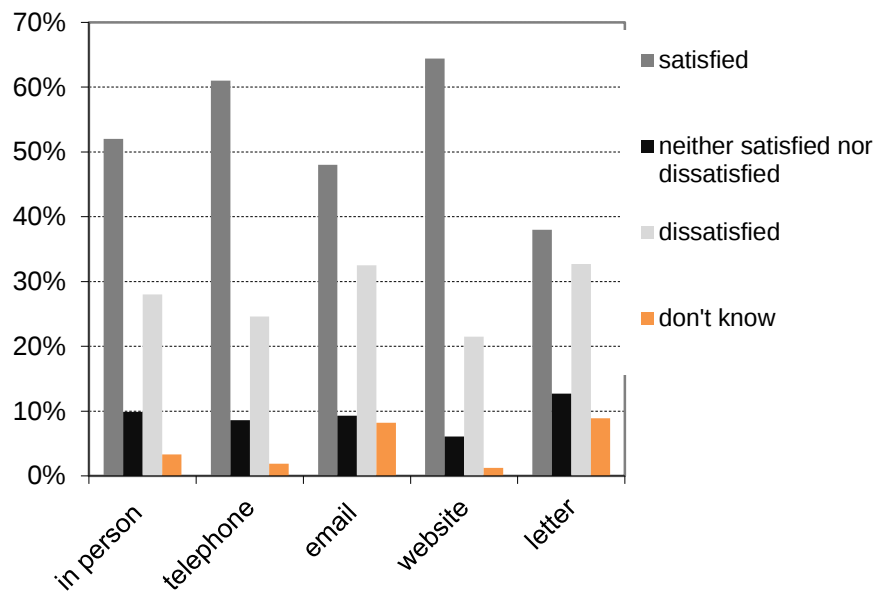


Figure 22: “Is the Council efficient and well run”

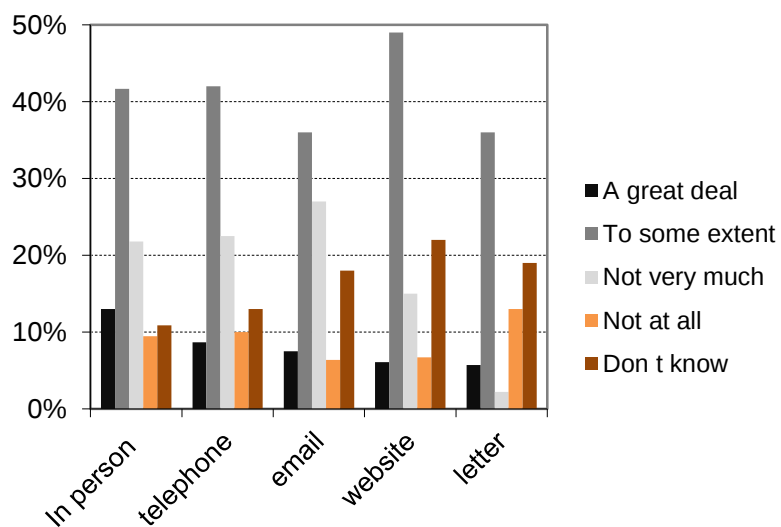


Figure 23: “Is the Council trustworthy” (recoded)*

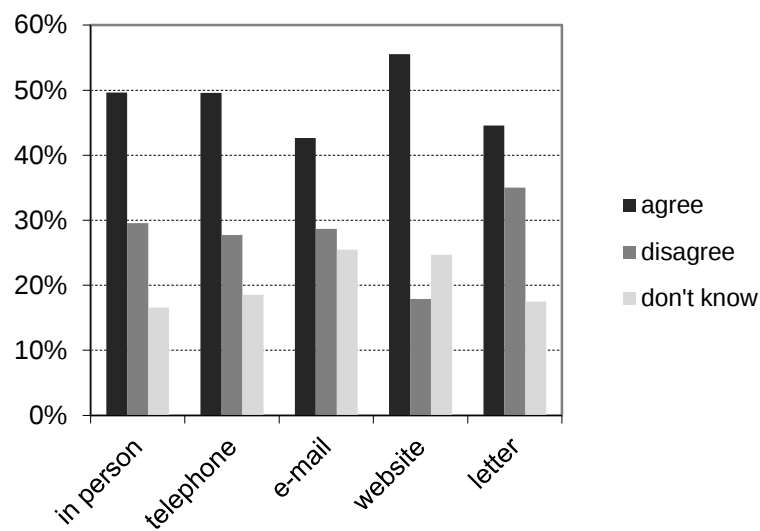


Figure 24: “How well does the Council keep residents informed about the services and benefits it provides”

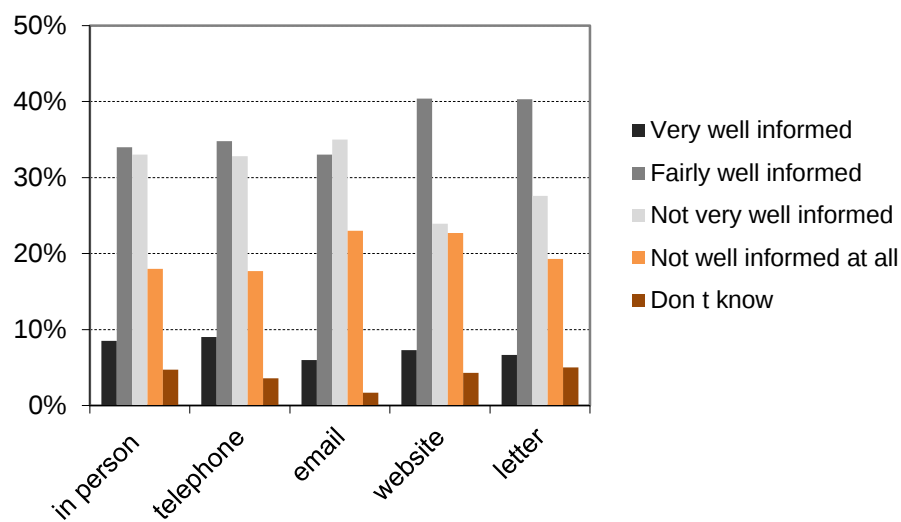
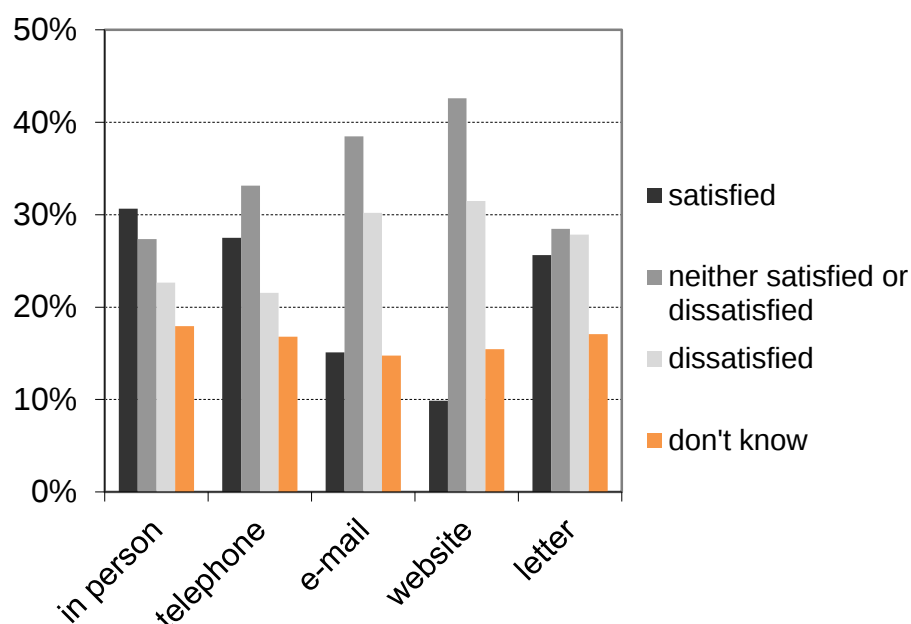


Figure 25: “How Satisfied of dissatisfied are you with the opportunities for participation in local decision making?” (recoded)*



8.3.4 Population characteristics

This section summarises the results for the following population variables compared against channel choice, all showing a statistically significant relationship at 95% confidence (*):

- 1) status of employment (Figure 26)*;
- 2) tenure (Figure 27)* ; and
- 3) age (Figures 28 and 29)*.

With eight different bands of employment status in the original data, the numbers were too thinly spread to show real differences between the channels. The data was therefore recoded into two bands as follows:

- 1) “Working/studying” including employed full-time, employed part-time, self-employed and full-time education; and
- 2) “Not at work” including workless, permanently unable to work, retired and looking after the home.

In sum, lower usage of electronic channels and higher preference for face-to-face was characteristic of the economically inactive (Figure 26), social tenants (council and RSL/ Registered Social Landlord) (Figure 27), and those aged over 45 (Figure 29).

In terms of age, Figure 28 suggests that the use of the telephone increases with age, while the use of the email decreases. There is a peak of the over 65s who the use of the Internet at the same level (7%) as those in the 25-44 age group. However, due to the small sample size of internet users this cannot be proven as statistically significant, but the focus group results reported later in this chapter would support the view that there could be a significant number of competent 'silver surfers' in Manchester (see focus groups, 8.5.3). As reported in chapter 5.3.2 (see Figure 8), Ofcom (2007) concluded that age is a significant digital divider with 45 years being the cut-off point after which the Internet adoption rate reduces significantly in the UK population. The MCC data was recoded into two age bands, the results of which corroborate with the Ofcom observation: Manchester residents aged 45 or above are significantly less likely to have contacted the Council via email or website (Figure 29).

Figure 26: “Channel choice by employment status” (recoded)*

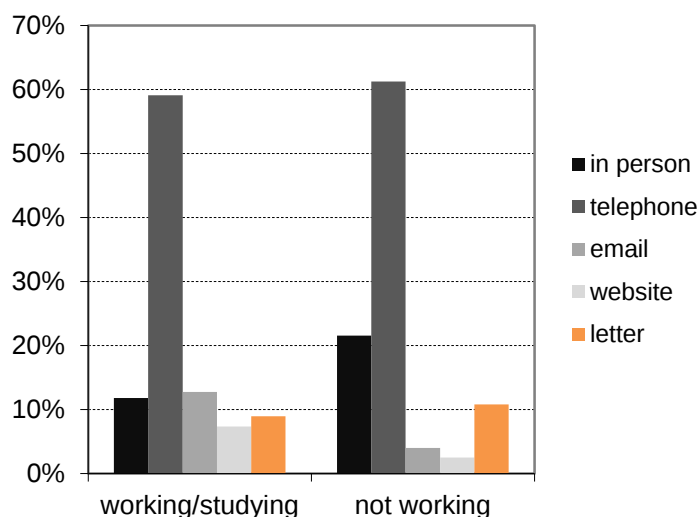


Figure 27: “Channel choice by tenure”*

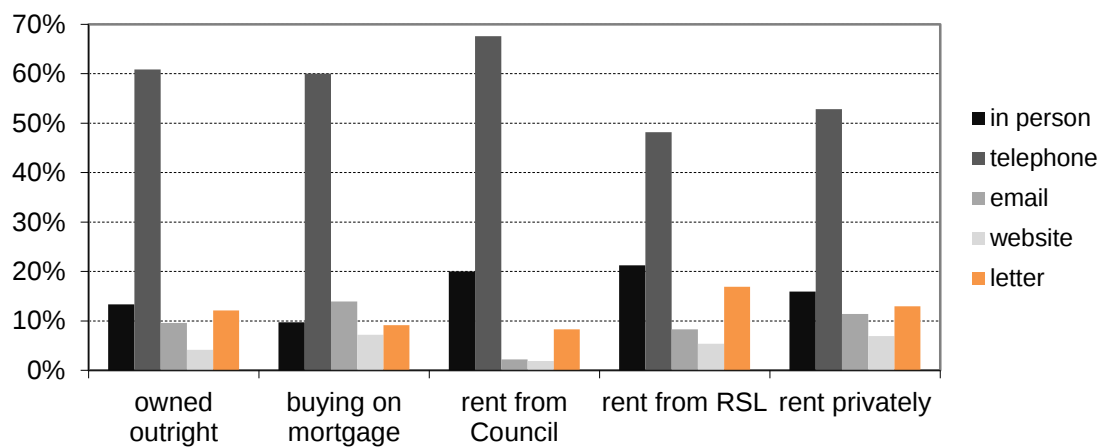


Figure 28: “Channel choice by age”

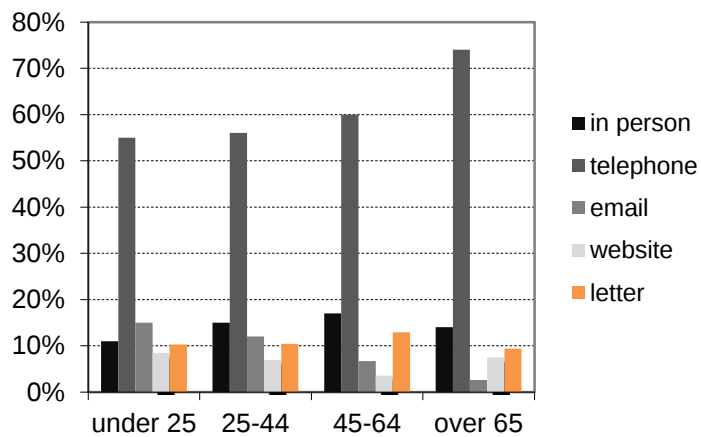
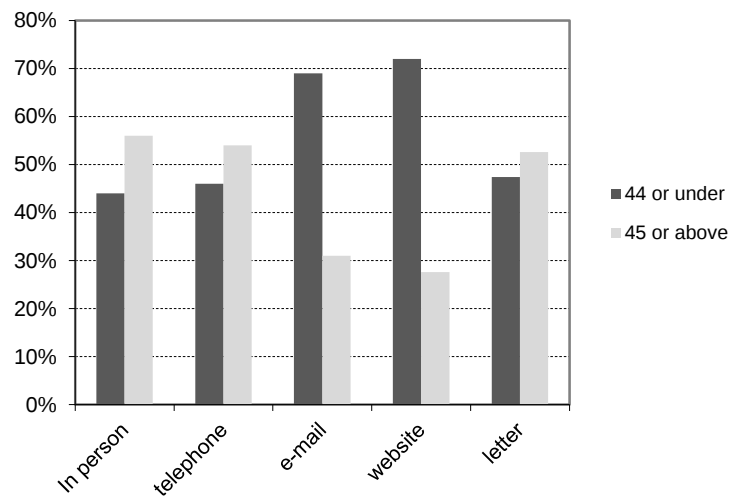


Figure 29: “Channel choice by age” recoded*



8.3.5 “Contacting the Council” customer survey 2008

As mentioned in chapter 7, the MIP commissioned a customer survey in 2008 from Ipsos MORI to gauge citizens’ channel preferences in conjunction with the plans for a Corporate Contact Centre, and in particular, aiming to introduce Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology to the call centre.

The results of the “Contacting the Council” survey (November 2008) are broadly supportive of the findings of the Best Value Survey analysis presented in the previous section. The overall sample size was 500, but as the number of respondents using channels other than the telephone is small, the worth of any cross-channel comparisons is questionable. Only 7% (n=24) of the respondents had reported the website and 6% (n=20) email as the channel of their latest contact with the Council. Despite the small numbers, the sample broadly reflects the overall channel volumetrics at EoC where combined web and email use was 11.4% in 2008 increasing to 16% in 2010 (see 7.3.3).

The most robust findings relate to the use of the telephone. This is a key area given the MCC plans to extend the Corporate Contact Centre model to all service areas. As reported in chapter 7, automated (IVR) menus were seen as the most likely solution to allow one number for all Council contact, even if it is unpopular with elected members. The MORI results show that customer satisfaction is likely to reduce if automated telephone services (IVR) are introduced. By contrast, the findings in the previous section show that the web channel, although fully automated, results in less dissatisfaction than other channels.

Such results could easily lead to a ringing endorsement of the web channel which would seem capable of yielding high customer satisfaction whilst delivering lucrative efficiencies. However, the demographic results in the previous section showing deep digital divides add complexity to this argument.

8.4 Summary of the National Take-up study and MCC Best Value survey

The national Take-up study confirms that there are entrenched attitudes towards using the telephone when contacting the Council. Although the majority of information requests about the selected five environmental services were made online, the most service requests were made by telephone. It would appear that a number of citizens

switch between channels for different tasks. A residual finding highlighted that English local authorities were either ill-equipped or reluctant to measure channel volumetrics as at 2007-2008, and that there is no universal consensus of how to define and therefore quantify customer contact in the local authority context.

Manchester's Best Value Survey results confirm a preference towards the telephone. Digital divides are shown consistently throughout; economically inactive residents, social tenants (Council and RSL) and those above the age of 45 are significantly less likely to use the email or web to contact the Council, and more likely to opt for face to face contact.

Contacts made via the internet and telephone result in the highest customer satisfaction in terms of overall satisfaction with the outcome, the quality of the information received and perceptions on the efficiency of the Council. Conversely, emails and letters result in the lowest customer satisfaction. The web channel gives the best results on perceptions of the trustworthiness of the Council.

Satisfaction with opportunities for participation is lowest among web and email users and highest with those who had face to face contact. This finding supports the conclusion that opportunities for online participation are scarce in MCC. This supports core message from chapter 7 that when the citizen is treated as a customer, any engagement is based on 'customer satisfaction' rather than democratic participation.

Next, qualitative data generated in two Manchester neighbourhoods is presented.

8.5 'What makes you click?'

8.5.1 Introduction to the neighbourhoods: Wythenshawe and Levenshulme

"Places are spaces of social relations", posits the Wythenshawe-born geographer Doreen Massey (2002, p.459). Wythenshawe or Levenshulme bear connotations to specific administrative-political units or boundaries, but the neighbourhoods are in everyday language as fluid as the term Manchester in chapter 6. The map below depicts Manchester's districts of which there are 30 (Figure 30). In Manchester's elongated figure, Wythenshawe is in the extreme South, thus quite a considerable distance from the city centre, while Levenshulme is situated closer to the centre. The district of Wythenshawe comprises five wards: Woodhouse Park, Sharston, Baguley, Brooklands and Northenden. The area known as Levenshulme comprises not just Levenshulme ward but also parts of the neighbouring Gorton South ward.

Figure 30: Manchester Districts



(Source: <http://www.manchester2002-uk.com/maps/city-of-mcr-map.html>)

Residents' focus groups were organised at the local library in both areas. Manchester libraries offer not only access to PIAPs, but also tailored one-to-one ICT tutoring of up to six sessions for Manchester residents free of charge, entirely built around the learners' individual preferences and needs. In 2008/9, 1504 new learners underwent the personalised "Lifelong Learning" programme in Manchester (M4). As part of the neighbourhood case studies, interviews were conducted with Lifelong ICT Learning facilitators at both libraries.

Wythenshawe library is situated in the Forum (see Figure 31) with a number of co-located public services. It is a flagship project redeveloped in 2002 from the original 1960's community centre in "the Civic", as Wythenshawe town centre is known to the locals (M10). Wythenshawe is known as a "monolithic council estate" (M23) built largely from the 1920's onwards as an overspill estate for residents from the industrial slums of the inner city, thus representing a specific phase in the physical development of the 'Cottonopolis' (see 6.2). The area is also known as a garden city due to the high proportion of green space it was designed to provide. In recent years, the housing stock has been largely transferred to two RSLs; Willow Park in 1999 and Parkway Green in 2006. Socio-economically, large parts of Wythenshawe falls within the most deprived 5% in IMD 2007.

By comparison, most of Levenshulme's housing stock is predominantly late 19th/early 20th century terraced properties with limited green space. Like many of Manchester's districts its population started to expand from 1850's onwards in synch with the industrial revolution described in chapter 6. In recent years, the more deprived parts of Levenshulme bordering Gorton South ward have fluctuated between 5 and 10% most deprived LSOAs in IMD 2004 and 2007. Levenshulme has a higher-than-average proportion of privately rented properties, and it is home to an ethnically more diverse community (up to 30% BME) than Wythenshawe (10% BME) (MCC, 2009d). Due to the ward boundary review in 2004, the area known to residents as Levenshulme is split between two wards, Gorton South and Levenshulme, the former showing higher levels of deprivation than the latter. Levenshulme library still operates from the building opened in 1904 as a public Carnegie library (see Figure 32), which is situated in the more deprived Gorton South ward.

Figure 31: Wythenshawe Forum



(source: author)

Figure 32: Levenshulme Library



(source: Flickr creative commons)

8.5.2 Characterising the neighbourhoods

To characterise Levenshulme, an extract from a local blogger who was shortlisted for the Manchester Blog Awards (mentioned in chapter 6.5 in conjunction with MDDA) is quoted here:

"I find that people are often quite sniffy about Levenshulme but I love living here. I love the Victorian houses, the awnings above the shops in the high street, the Antiques Village and the bizarre shops that appear on Stockport Road." (<http://www.ladylevenshulme.co.uk/about/>)

If people are "sniffy" about Levenshulme, Wythenshawe's reputation has been repeatedly in the public eye after a visit to the area in 2007 by then Leader of the opposition David Cameron, where he was photographed with a local 'hoodie' gesturing a gun behind him, the year after the Duchess of York describing the estate as "poverty-stricken" (The Guardian, 2008). The word to characterise Wythenshawe is given here to Massey:

"It was the birth of a new social space: a municipal garden city. The new architecture of quality cottage housing for the working class was also a new architecture of social relations" (2002, p. 461).

Massey argues that the once spacious and green neighbourhood can now be a "closed down" experience for many of its occupants, particularly the elderly or infirm, due to a combination of fear of crime and physical obstacles; poor grounds maintenance or vandalised benches. However, despite the problems, Massey claims that the social networks are strong: *"the people on the corner watch out for each other"* (ibid p.473).

Finally, e-society geodemographic neighbourhood profiles are quoted below to give an indication of ICT literacy in both areas. The e-society profiler operates on the level of unit postcode, or 16 households, therefore a number of searches were performed to choose a profile that matched a number of postcodes in the vicinity of the focus group venues. The e-society profiler (www.spatial-literacy.org) has been developed at UCL as part of a wider spatial literacy programme (Longley *et al*, 2008). The profiles are based on information about the levels of awareness of ICTs in communities, usage patterns and perceived impacts on human capital and quality of life (ibid). Whilst such profiling is based on a crude generalisation, according to Longley *et al* (2008), it provides good context for more detailed case studies.

Wythenshawe: Group B “E-marginalised”:

“The ‘E – marginalised’ are not necessarily averse to the use of electronic technologies but often lack the disposable income to equip themselves with them, or the training and education needed to understand how to make effective use of them. In this Group we find very low level of PC ownership and very little use of the Internet to obtain information or to undertake transactions. However there are members of this Group who regularly use personal computers to keep in touch via email and more are considering getting on line. This Group does use simpler and less expensive technologies such as mobile phones. Many members of this Group are relatively unskilled young workers, many of whom are in manual occupations. Many also live in low rise council estates, in areas of high unemployment, low incomes and where people are reliant upon public services.”

Levenshulme: Group D “E for entertainment and shopping”

“This Group includes a number of moderately well paid blue collar workers for whom the Internet and personal computing provide important leisure activities. This Group tends to use the Internet not for obtaining information about products or for learning, but rather to provide access to music, games and general entertainment. People in this Group are smart enough to learn new methods of accessing what they want but they are not necessarily interested in technology for its own sake. Besides providing a form of personal relaxation they also see the computer as a resource for family entertainment. Members of this Group are found among areas of cheaper owner occupied housing, particularly in neighbourhoods with high proportions of households with children.”

Based on the e-society profiles, it appears that Levenshulme residents are more ICT literate than in Wythenshawe, which generally reflects the slightly better socio-economic profile of the area. The makeup of the focus groups also reflected this balance. Paradoxically, Wythenshawe has a superior digital infrastructure than Levenshulme; Wythenshawe was 'cabled' originally by NTL, latterly taken over by Virgin Media whose customer care and telesales call centres are still located in Wythenshawe. Conversely, there were still households in Levenshulme unable to get cable broadband in 2009 (M1, M23).

8.5.3 Focus groups

The Manchester focus groups were held in March 2009, and both groups were attended by a mix of local residents with a varied background aged between 23 and 75 years. The participants were invited to introduce their background in their own words in whichever way they felt comfortable. Most made reference to their professional background or current main interest: poet, song writer, secretary, (retired) bricklayer, (retired) infant class teacher, residential care worker, porter, art student, architect, self-employed IT consultant, distance learning tutor/teacher of psychology and sociology, volunteer at the local radio station. Both focus groups had members with very limited experience of the internet, as well as individuals who used the internet routinely for work and/or leisure/social purposes. In Levenshulme, five out of six had a home PC with Internet, in Wythenshawe, the ratio was three out of seven, mirroring the e-society profiles.

The focus groups were designed to discuss preferences, habits and attitudes towards the internet as opposed to other channels, starting from generic use in everyday life (e-commerce, information searches, social) and moving towards what might be termed e-government, finishing with a broader discussion on values and social inclusion. The groups started with scoping experiences and 'gut feelings', then probing opinion about reasons for choosing specific channels (face-to-face, telephone, internet). The hypothetical concept of 'my account' function where all council services could be accessed via an online system by the customer was also discussed. A variation of 'my account' is the target for most local e-government programmes across Europe due to the policy convergence around citizen-centric and self-service delivery models.

The results are reported under seven themes as follows:

Part 1: Choosing the 'right' channel - coping with change and managing risk

Part 2: Paradoxes of technology - saving or wasting time?

Part 3: Quality of information and services, public vs. private

Part 4: Moving services online - "my account" and data sharing

Part 5: What's in it for me, what's in it for society?

Part 6: Silver surfers shine through

Part 7: Customer engagement vs. citizen engagement

The quotations from residents below are marked with (W) and (L) respectively to indicate which focus group the comment was made in.

Part 1: Choosing the 'right' channel - coping with change and managing risk

The Lifelong Learning ICT facilitators at both libraries suggested that (inexperienced) “*people are paranoid*” (M16) about risks, particularly with bank details and other online transactions. In terms of generic Internet use, people often “*stuck to what they knew*” (M16), or comfort zones, drawing 'red lines' over which they would not step in order to cope with change and manage perceived risk. In the literature, technology acceptance is associated with perceived risks vis-a-vis benefits; moreover, e-government use is affected by two-tiered construct of trust: trust in the technology and trust in the service provider (e.g. Carter and Belanger, 2005, see 3.6.3). Examples of this are given below:

- Trust in technology/channel:

“The other thing about online shopping is... I mean, I don't mind ringing up, ordering something and paying a bill, the National Trust or something like that. I wouldn't want to use it (debit card) online, I would be worried about giving all my details and yet I've done it over the phone so I don't know what the difference is. Because they're going on a computer, aren't they” (L)

“Wouldn't trust it (internet or telephone) wouldn't give my card details to anyone. I'd look in a proper catalogue shop, trusted, like lots of people would, if anything goes wrong take it back. Tried and trusted” (W)

- Trust in the provider:

“I rang St Ann's hospice, that didn't bother me, but I wouldn't want to ring Tesco's” (L)

“I wouldn't go on e-Bay, but would go to the different (branded) store websites” (W)

Those who shop online frequently gave examples of why the internet is a good place to shop, citing convenience and abundance of choice as the perceived benefits, indicating also how they mitigated against risk:

“I found a specialist retailer online and got these batteries that were just right, I thought I couldn't replace them at all, I had tried lots of places and none had any.” (L)

"I always do my homework first, I look at reviews by other users, and say if there are fifty plus reviews you know it's reliable" (W)

Another participant, new to ICTs, who generally preferred face-to-face transactions, shows how perceptions can change over time and through gradual exposure to new technology:

"In fact, I'm now getting to a stage where I don't mind emailing, because I have to deal with a lot of emails, my son sends me emails. It's a lot faster and easier to email a lot of things. You can just press the button and send the same message to a lot of people. It can be very handy, emails." (W)

Something that feels familiar, relatively safe and low risk, such as emailing a family member, lowers the threshold of accepting something new. Here, the 'halo effect' can be seen to influence decisions (see 5.7). On the other hand, a sceptical attitude towards the competence and responsiveness of the local council meant that the participants were less likely to try their luck with a new, untrusted channel. This is in direct contrast with the findings in Helsinki, where the higher level of trust in the competence of the Council meant that citizens had accepted online channels sooner.

Part 2: Paradoxes of technology - saving or wasting time?

The very technology aimed at saving time or money can regularly result in more time or resources expended. These paradoxical opinions came forth in the discussions about online banking.

To illustrate this, one technologically-savvy student who used the internet daily, promoted online banking as the best option for personal banking:

"When I'm online banking, I find that I can control what I'm doing, as in how much money do I want to go on this account if I'm doing a transfer, or if I want to pay something off, it's a lot easier than going all the way to the bank, line up and where someone can make a mistake." (W)

Many in the group did not share this feeling and felt much more comfortable with walking into their local branch, and the following dialogue ensued:

"Because face-to-face contact means an awful lot. Instructions on the telephone and internet can go wrong and do go wrong." (W)

"It's local, it's handy, it's easy, as I'm passing I can go in, rather than spend my

time on a machine doing it when I can just do it a couple of seconds when I'm passing.” (W)

“How many places are there with four or five tellers and only two on, and a queue going out the door?” (W)

Furthermore, the decision to embrace or avoid technology is not always personal, family and close relationships can have a big influence, as one participant explained:

“That's something (e-banking) that my husband would be really bothered about, he'd never do that.” (L)

In terms of the difference between telephone banking and online banking, the Wythenshawe group dismissed the idea of telephone banking, they preferred either face-to-face or online banking. The Levenshulme group had participants using both online and telephone banking. Respondents felt that talking to someone on the phone was sometimes nicer, and furthermore, that the transaction is done instantly via telephone banking:

“If you want access immediately, to avoid late charges for example. We've phoned up at midnight and there's someone's there to talk to you.” (L)

However, others felt that it is a personal choice to do with sensory preferences:

“I prefer seeing it as opposed to hearing it, it's individual.” (L)

The expression “seeing it” was used often in conjunction with online banking; *seeing* what money has gone out when and therefore feeling in control. Those who had started online banking felt that it was a great time-saver, whilst those who had not used it thought they would be wasting their time on a computer. People's opinions were moulded by the experiences and familiarity with technology.

By comparison, in Helsinki the concept of casually walking into a high street branch is disappearing. Bank charges for teller services are adequately high to usher customers towards using the internet, or else automated self-service machines situated in the foyers of bank branches.

Part 3: Quality of information and services – public vs. private

The focus group respondents had experienced a level of frustration with websites that they felt were inaccurate, incomplete or out of date. Local authority websites in particular were suspected of being out of date.

“I wouldn’t say that I trust the (local) government, but then again if it’s on the website you can always print it out and beat them with it afterwards.” (L)

This evidence conflicts directly with the findings in Helsinki, where the focus group and pilot survey pointed towards residents feeling that the internet is the most up to date and instant channel, and that the local authority website is a trusted source of information. The interviews in Helsinki suggested that a “halo” effect was one of the reasons for a high take-up of e-government in Finland.

In Manchester, the participants favoured the telephone to conduct their business with the Council in both groups. A small minority of participants thought they might send an email as a first option *“because I’m a bit lazy” (W)*, then follow up with a phone call if nothing happened subsequently. Most participants had used the telephone to access Council services.

“You get a ticket number when you ring (Environment on Call), I’ve done it many times and not had any problems” (W)

“If you speak to someone then it becomes their personal responsibility, if you go back to them and say this didn’t happen, they feel bad [...] But I must say, I kept phoning this person but they never got back to me. She gave me a direct number, I kept leaving messages but she never phoned back. But I thought I was onto a good thing when I got the number.” (W)

The latter quote corroborates with the opinion expressed in Helsinki that personal service puts more responsibility onto the service provider, by the same token, automated channels make the citizen feel more responsible.

The participants shared stories of having numerous bad experiences with the telephone, trying to ring the Council for bulky waste or Council tax, in some cases for weeks, and not getting through.

“I got some things out of the attic, and I’ve tried for three weeks and cannot get through. Ring, ring, ring, nobody answers. Only once it was engaged so at least I knew there was somebody there.” (W)

Anecdotally, this raises concern about the extent of latent demand, discussed in chapter 7. Interestingly, bad experiences with the phone have not deterred citizens from relying on the telephone in the future as the “trusted” channel.

When asked about using online forms or emails to contact Environment on Call, the responses were:

“No, you need to speak to them, don't you” (W)

“It's better to speak to someone, you get a reaction, you get a promise, an involvement of a person rather than a computer.” (W)

“Because they're going to put it on a computer anyway, won't they, so why bother yourself.” (W)

“It's not always clear what they'll pick up and what they don't. I rang once trying to get rid of something only to find out they don't deal with that.” (W)

“I spend the minimum amount of time on the computer just to find the necessary information, then I prefer to ring to get it sorted” (L)

The last comment corroborates with the findings in the National Take-up study which showed that e-literate individuals use the Internet for information searching then switching to the telephone to request the service. The participants were then explained about online forms or emails at Environment on Call, and that there was a service standard of a guaranteed response within a set time, attitudes were still sceptical:

“But it's the local council!” (W)

When asked to differentiate between the feelings towards the local council and commercial websites, respondents felt that commercial actors performing out of business interest would sooner have up to date information on their website, none were particularly concerned that the material might have a commercial bias:

“A company would probably have the right information on their website, because they want to sell you things. But perhaps the government website isn't updated that regularly.” (L)

There appears to be a lack of confidence in the Council as a competent service provider, which drives the demand for the telephone. With this suspected incompetence, residents feel that the personal involvement of an agent increases their chances of achieving the desired outcome, which is missing in the electronically mediated channels. The residents did not have any experiential evidence to support the hypothesis that the telephone achieves better results, as they lacked the experience of using electronic channels for familiar transactions. Unclear rules and regulations also negated against choosing online channels.

Lack of trust affecting the decision not to choose electronic channels corroborates with the findings of the Best Value Survey, where those citizens who had used the internet channel had a more positive perception of the Council's trustworthiness. Importantly, the findings from Helsinki also support the argument that trust correlates positively with e-government use.

Part 4: Moving Council services online - “my account” and data sharing

As with online banking, being able to 'see' and manage your transactions with the Council via a single online interface was put to the group; whether they would like it, whether it would change their preference for the telephone.

“Say with council tax, if you had your own account, where you could check out things like payments, that would be interesting.” (L)

“Yes, I think so... at the moment you have to make note of all these different things and it takes a long time to dig up details, whereas having it on one system would be good.” (L)

“I haven't got a computer at home, but if I did, I'd think it's a brilliant idea.” (W)

The student who felt empowered by online banking disliked the idea of “my account”:

“I'm happier with the way things are, I haven't got that much to do (with the council), personally”(W)

One participant made their feelings known by asking:

“Is it called the identity card?” (W)

The sharing of personal data between public bodies and Council departments was

discussed. Perhaps surprisingly, nobody objected to the idea. On the contrary, on finding out that currently much of the information held within one LA database cannot be shared for different purposes, surprise and even disapproval was expressed: *"it's terrible"* (W).

"If you've got something to hide then you should be worried, I think they should share information" (W)

"One thing it would be good for, people couldn't lie about where they live to get their child into a good school." (W)

Others were more cautious, feeling that citizens should be given the option to elect in or out of data sharing. Experienced Internet users liked the idea in principle, for as long as they would be given control of what data goes onto the system, how it is maintained, and having the option of using the phone in parallel:

"I want to be able to pick up the phone for example, and look at the same screen as the person at the other end of the line and say, see that information there, that's wrong, now can you put it right." (L)

Others expressed concern about public services moving online:

"I'd rather keep it the way it is, no internet" (W)

"But what about the people who haven't got the internet at all. I've got loads of friends, my age, who wouldn't know the first thing about it. People live longer, people in their 80s, how are they ever going to get into that mode?" (L)

Within both groups participants discussed openly their expectations and experiences of the digital divide. These ideas are summarised in the next concluding section for the focus groups.

Part 5: What's in it for me, what's in it for society?

Participants were asked to make an assessment of what having (or not having) the internet meant to them personally and in the wider context of society. The working professionals had certainly experienced a transformation or a 'digital revolution' in the workplace:

"I use the internet a lot for both work and social. It has revolutionised pretty

much the way we work, everything is much more instantaneous with other consultants. Letter writing doesn't happen anymore. I'm on the internet the entire working day, plus couple of hours in the evening as well, communicate with friends." (L)

The participants showed a high degree of awareness of the social and spatial unevenness in the Network Society, on a global as well as local scale, and the structural changes they have witnessed over the years owing to technology:

"Computers create work, but put a lot of people out of work. I used to work in a computer room years ago, they used to be massive. The computer programmers, they used to be like gods. We used to have input clerks, rows of girls with these cards" (L)

"It makes the world smaller." (L)

"But it can make it less fair." (L)

"I've got a student in Tanzania. She's doing a-level sociology online. Her outlook on life is going to be completely different from her peer group. She's got two worlds, her village and then the technological world at school. And she cannot go back to her village life after her world view has changed so much by technology." (L)

Another participant brought the argument closer to home:

"You don't have to go to Tanzania to get that, you'll get that in Longsight or Levenshulme." (L)

Many of the participants felt that the internet offers first and foremost 'a window to the world', rather than something that focuses on local issues:

"It's called the world wide web, isn't it." (W)

The groups were asked about their attitudes towards using tax payers' money towards making internet accessible for all.

"Yes, I think so. What happens to that child whose parents don't have a computer, disadvantaged children should be helped". (L)

"It should be available to everybody." (W)

"I thought when Labour got in that all pensioners would be given a computer, but I haven't seen anything since. I come here a lot (library), I can't afford a computer at home." (W)

However, there were many apprehensions, too. Participants were suspicious that providing people with access to the Internet is an excuse to force them to use electronic channels, similar concerns were raised in Helsinki. One example given related to dealing with the LA about the care of a frail mother-in-law, it was felt that the professionals involved with the care must be contactable directly on the telephone and face-to-face to deal with any problems that may arise. A consensus was forming with more experienced internet users that with purely transactional services, e.g. a missed bin collection, the future may well be the internet only. But with emotive issues, such as a long-standing complaint or care services, personal contact was of the essence.

Overall, the focus groups displayed very similar outcomes in terms of channel choices and feelings towards the Council. However, there was one obvious difference, the more computer-literate group in Levenshulme seemed to accept that technology was an “*unstoppable train*” (L):

“I believe in two generations' time no one will be without the Internet” (L)

The progress of technology was met with mixed feelings. The groups expressed apprehensions about technological 'progress':

“They said they want to give every child a computer, but now we have young people leaving school without literacy and numeracy skills” (L)

“Why do kids need mobile phones, you see young mothers on the street, talking on their mobiles, and not even looking at the child” (L)

“I've been on Facebook, and I've seen what most people write there, it's pure rubbish, who's got time for all that?” (W)

“What the Council wants to do with the money they save – cut jobs!” (W)

“You've got to be careful about how technology is driven, it's currently driven by international companies exploiting the markets. I think people have to be aware of the separate nature of transaction and interaction in real time; anything on the internet is virtual time, it's not real time. In everybody's life you need enough real time events and interaction. In today's society you need to have both.” (L)

Part 6: Silver surfers shine through

The silver surfers were already picked up in a statistic regarding MCC Listening to Your Views survey, where the over 65 group had a similar internet adoption rate for Council contact as the 25-44 age group, considerably more than people in the 45-64 age group. In both focus groups, the enthusiastic 'silver surfers', i.e. computer-literate retirees were advocates of technology and they spoke freely in favour of it, encouraging other (younger) participants to learn the skills.

In response to the question "has the internet changed your life?" the following opinions were expressed by these older participants:

"Yes, definitely. I spend more time on that than the pub." (L)

"It's another life" (W)

"I feel that my attitude towards computers has changed. I think now we might get one. We're toying with the idea, but my husband still has reservations. He's working class, he used to get paid on Fridays in cash, he'd pay the bills and he'd go to the bank himself. He knows he's got to come around to it. I don't think it's going to change our lives. It should enhance our lives." (L)

Many of the silver surfers used Facebook, Twitter, booked holidays, and they felt strongly that they have had "a new life" thanks to the internet. They are an exception to the statistical fact that age comes with a disadvantage vis-a-vis technology. In Wythenshawe, the eldest participant, a retired schoolteacher, was the only one in her group who used social networking actively, connecting with friends geographically far away, she also had skills that would be classed as advanced, being able to upload her own photos/material, thus contributing to the burgeoning user-created content on the web.

For silver surfers, personal contacts and recommendations are important in technology adoption. One older resident described how she was introduced to online services:

"I was at my doctors to review my prescription. I said so when can I ring up, he said oh no go on the internet. He spent 10 minutes showing me all these things on the internet. He said you must get a computer. He showed me all these different things, brought up the news. Now I go on the internet to order my prescription." (L)

The silver surfers also spoke openly about meeting new people via websites:

“Oh yeah, I've made friends online... I met this woman, her husband had died. She came to Manchester and we were going to go or a meal, she introduced me to Facebook, I didn't know anything about that until then. I got on with her really well.” (L)

Another retired participant speaks of being contacted by an old school friend via Friends reunited. She had some experience of computers, but unlike the other silver surfers, she did not have the internet at home, and used her son as a proxy to access the internet:

“I couldn't first relate to it at all, the typed letters that were printed out and sent to me. Since I met her personally, it became different, I can do that now, although I always write back proper letters. First I felt like I was speaking to a stranger, it seemed so impersonal, I thought why didn't she write it down herself?” (L)

The focus groups perhaps attracted these confident silver surfers, but in Finland the experience of silver surfers with less frequent online use or a proxy to rely on highlighted an important issue, the worry of forgetting what one has learned. In Manchester, this issue was brought up although it was not expressed with a degree of anxiety as in the Finnish case, perhaps because in Manchester there is less reliance on online services compared with Helsinki:

“When I first retired, I came here (library) for a course initially to learn about the internet, it was fine then because I could use my son's computer at home, but he's flown the nest. I haven't got a computer now, so any skills I've learned I've lost now. I do think it's useful, well Facebook I don't think I would like. I just tend to go to my son if I need anything. I think we are toying with the idea of getting one (computer), but my husband is still in the 1970's - he doesn't trust them at all.” (L)

The lack of anxiety or worry also relates to the person's ability to rely on a close relative for help in any internet-related matters.

Part 7: Customer engagement vs citizen engagement

The participants' experiences of online civic activities were limited, but some had signed a petition or joined a campaign, for causes such as asking the government to underwrite Christie hospital's donations lost in the Icelandic banking crisis. Many of the participants did not think that they had engaged in some way or other with the

Council, but in discussion it appeared that a few had had involvement in local planning consultations or other public debates, mostly to do with local services, the redevelopment of the district centre, or Ward coordination. Any experience of participation with the Local Authority however had been either face-to-face (attending public meetings) or writing in response to consultations – some had done so via email. Many had experiences of sending a complaint letter, but as one participant explained *“You can’t bend their ear with an email”* (W)

Here, the results of the secondary analysis of the Council's Listening to Your Views survey corroborate, those who had used online channels were least satisfied with their opportunities for participation. This brings forth a question about active citizenship; on the basis of the focus groups it appears that e-government has not had much impact on local activism.

In chapter 7 it was noted that a customer philosophy focusing on a transactional relationship with residents permeated ICT development within MCC, and the residents' experiences mirrored this; no one had experience of online participation with the Council. These findings support the argument that there is an absence of 'e-democracy' or participatory e-government in general (see 3.6) as well as in Manchester.

The lacklustre impact of e-government on citizens' lives should not be confused with the influence that the internet has had on people's lives generally; the latter is significant. Based on the focus groups, it can be argued the citizen-consumer and the private citizen is empowered as the Internet offers endless opportunities for information, lifestyle choices, entertainment, friendships as well as efficient ways to manage everyday life. Some of the focus groups participants had encountered “TINA” (there is no alternative) which confirmed their suspicions that online technology is an “unstoppable train”.

Overall, the focus groups confirmed that the internet also contributes to awareness and activism in the civil society, but it seems to punch below its weight in the relationship between the local council and citizens. Indeed, many feel that the internet is a “window to the world” rather than to their local environments. The relationship between local residents and the city council is explored in more detail in the next section.

8.5.4 In touch with the council

In both focus groups, it became apparent that some participants were keener to discuss the idea of being in touch with the council, via web or otherwise, whilst others did not have that much to say about it. One young man expressed that he did not see the benefit of “my account” because in his view he did not have “that much to do with the Council”.

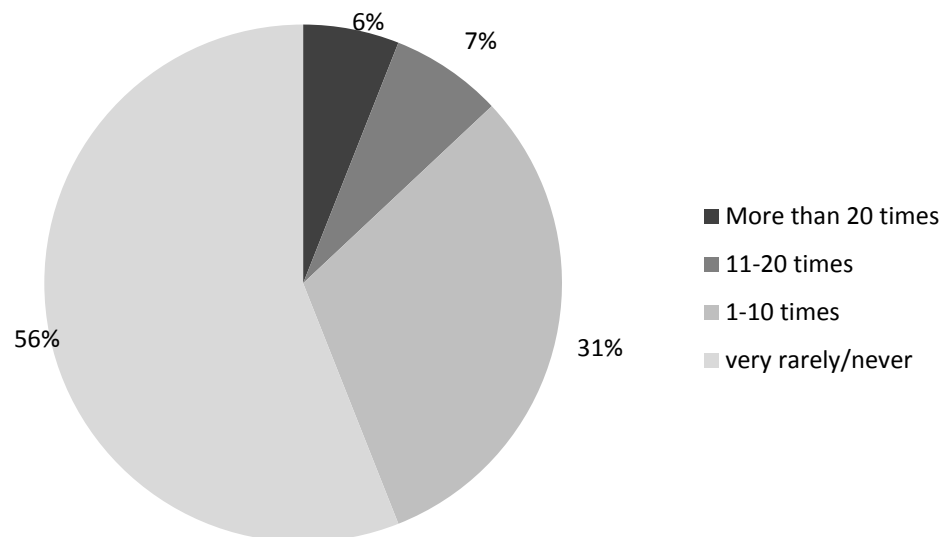
Throughout the research, particularly in the interviews with the MIP, the view was often expressed that:

“The vast majority of residents like you and I rarely come into contact with the Council. Frankly, I don't remember the last time I contacted my local council. It's only a small percentage of people who make up most of the work load and customer contact” (M3)

However, all households use and benefit from a range of Council services such as roads and pavements, street lights and green space, to mention but a few. The regulatory services including planning and licensing arguably affect everyone also. The governance of a city such as Manchester is an enormous operation involving a number of partner agencies, still many residents do not see themselves as having “much to do with the Council” apart from paying the Council tax and having their bins emptied.

It is therefore a reasonable question to ask how often residents contact the Council in general. The MORI Contacting the Council survey (Ipsos MORI, 2008) concluded that 56% of people contact the Council “very rarely or never”, depicted in Figure 33 below.

Figure 33: Percentage of residents contacting the Council by frequency of contact



(Source: Ipsos MORI, 2008)

Further evidence on the frequency and nature of customer contact was collected from libraries. A revealing fact is that 98% of Manchester's population live within 1 mile radius from a local library; it therefore makes sense to consider libraries as gateways to Council information (M4). Many of the focus group participants used the library as a source for all kinds of public service information, e.g. housing or jobs, and as part of the MIP's Access Manchester Strategy, Libraries were seen as 'access points' to the Council.

In 2008, 5% of all queries received in libraries related to MCC services other than the library (estimated at 21,000 queries on an annual basis). This information comes from a survey conducted during one week in June 2008, based on face to face and telephone enquiries. An important observation was brought up in this context; an increasing amount of 'council services' are delivered through arms-length or fully independent bodies, as part of a wider trend described as 'governance beyond the state' (Swyngedow, 2005) enshrined in the LGMA of New Labour. The Head of Libraries noted that there are fewer queries now than there were a few years ago to do with council services, due to popular areas such as housing and leisure having moved to external providers (M4). This highlights how the governance of local services has fragmented and become more complex in recent years.

In terms of volume, e-government is not a big part of Manchester residents' lives. Just

over half of Manchester's population have a passive relationship with the Council, initiating contact "very rarely or never". Of the other half who do, approximately 15% choose e-channels currently, according to EoC volumetrics and Best Value Survey data. Translated as a proportion of the whole population, an estimated 7-8% of Mancunians contact the Council via email or website. Disaggregated from emails, the web channel only attracts about 6% of those who make contact with the Council, or 3% of the entire population.

8.6 Summary

Previous chapters 6 and 7 have addressed the supply side of e-government whereas the present chapter 8 has approached e-government through the lens of citizens and neighbourhoods. The discussion in this summary is constructed to reflect the logic of research objective 4:

To establish the extent to which e-government mechanisms are successful in delivering the economic and social 'twin aims' of technology relating to service improvement and enabling local participation and empowerment.

The e-government agenda, as concluded in chapter 3, has been largely driven by the need to modernise 'inefficient bureaucracy' and to bring in cashable savings under the Varney Agenda. There has been a considerable amount of top-down influence from Whitehall in the way local councils have implemented e-government, in other words, on the supply side of e-government.

The first thing to highlight from the demand side is that over 50% of residents contact the Council "rarely or never"; of those who did get in touch, approximately 7% used the internet in 2008. Adding to this, Manchester's web development has been lagging behind for reasons outlined in chapter 7, therefore any efficiency gains through 'citizen-centric' automated services have not been realised, instead the material efficiency gains have been in the back office.

In light of the digital divides documented in 8.3.4 (age, tenure, economic status) it is empirically justified to say that those who are likely to need public services most are the least able to access them at the click of a mouse. This works against any projected efficiency gains from automated self-service channels, unless take-up among the most frequent users of services is boosted.

The national Take-up study demonstrated that many people who have access to the internet use it for informational purposes only and prefer to telephone to request services. One obvious explanation is the lack of web sophistication in LAs, but with 98% of Councils 'e-enabled' since 2005, this argument can only explain some of the preference for telephone over the web channel.

The focus group data suggests that the general lack of trust towards local government as competent service provider discourages the use of e-channels. Citizens suspected that the LA website would be out of date, and they anticipated problems when contacting the Council generally (over the phone or otherwise), rather than feeling confident that their query would be resolved. Lack of trust towards the service provider generally meant that citizen-consumers preferred "tried and tested" methods, face-to-face or telephone, and were less keen to try new channels. This corroborates with the existing body of research on technology acceptance in the field of e-government, where a two-tiered construct of trust has been argued to influence channel choices: trust in the technology and trust in government (see 3.6.3).

In terms of channel choices, a 'halo effect' was detected both in terms of individuals adopting new channels for one purpose and confidence spreading to other areas, as well as the halo of internet-literate 'champions' encouraging and helping others onto the 'digital ladder'. The halo effect can also prevent from adopting new technologies where close family members, for example, are reluctant or sceptical about them.

Furthermore, the 'silver surfers' demonstrated that age does not have to go hand in hand with the digital divide. However, an important message here is that internet skills learned later in life can be lost if not practised regularly, which leaves those without 'proxies' particularly vulnerable.

8.6.1 Satisfaction and trust

In the "Listening to your views" Best Value survey, the web channel seemed to consistently result in higher satisfaction and trust with the Council, apart from when it came to opportunities for participation in decision making. Here, the results were reversed. Face to face contact had resulted in most satisfaction, the web and email the least. The higher satisfaction with the overall outcome of the contact using the web channel could of course result from less complex queries being channelled

through the web, but the same cannot be said for the findings on general trust in the Council. There is no obvious reason why a contact over the internet should result in higher trust, but one could speculate on the basis of the findings in the previous section. If trust is a barrier for e-government take-up, those who trusted the Council more in the first place were likelier to elect for e-channels, therefore there is a 'bias' in the sample. It has not been possible to measure trust towards the technology itself quantitatively. In the UK, at the time of the fieldwork, there was no pressing need to adopt e-channels in order to access essential services (compared with banking or the widely held perceptions in Helsinki around social housing). At the moment, those who use electronic channels do so because they genuinely prefer them.

These findings mirror research results from North America where increased trust has been reported with local e-government use (Tolbert and Mossberger, 2006; Welch *et al*, 2004), and equally, the poor opportunities for online participation have been widely documented in the UK as well as overseas (e.g. Chadwick and May, 2003; Thomas and Streib, 2005; Kolsaker and Lee-Kelley, 2007).

Another interesting discovery was that email and letter both performed badly in terms of overall satisfaction, the quality of the information received and perceptions on the efficiency/ management of the Council. This would seem to support the view that channels with two-way interaction or some other form of immediate rapport facilitated by telephone, face-to-face and transactional web channels yield higher customer satisfaction. The lack of web sophistication, e.g. 'my account' functionality, therefore might explain some of the current preference towards the telephone. If web channels were perceived as more immediate and less 'mediated', take-up could increase.

8.6.1 'E' for empowerment?

Here, some of the evidence presented in the previous chapter 7 is relevant. The first observation to make is that in the field of 'e-government', Manchester has done little to engage let alone 'empower' residents directly. The experience of Ward coordination (see 7.5.3) showed that MCC is ill-equipped to handle bottom-up contact from residents; there was a fear of being 'inundated' if online participatory channels were developed. Deep silos, strategy-led control from the top and lack of resources or financial freedoms left front-line officers with little room for manoeuvre. The corporate IT systems did not support horizontal cooperation in ways that would allow accumulating and linking evidence from neighbourhoods through the various contact

paths (Ward coordination, complaints, service requests etc.). Also the lack of joining up between support services and front line services seemed inadequate.

Despite “putting customer at the heart of everything we do” there was no clear consensus over what customer contact is and what sort of mandate do different types of customer contact warrant. This is absolutely essential to resolve as customer contact constitutes the main ‘contact surface’ between the Council and the citizens. Before the corporate ICT agenda is likely to deliver “empowerment” for citizen-customers, the concept of customer contact needs to be based on a solid understanding within the Council.

However, in terms of the private citizen-consumer, there is no doubt that the internet can be empowering. For some, it has meant “another life”. The experience is different for younger generations who take the internet for granted, the “digital natives” (Floridi, 2007) who have either always had the internet or else adopted it at an early stage in their lives so that they never knew life without the internet as independent adults. The younger generations feel that in the foreseeable future “no one will be without the internet”, they also have less concern over migrating public services online, even as an exclusive channel. The discussion in chapter 9 considers the future of public services and what it might mean for society when and if most services will be delivered online.

9 DOES A RISING TIDE LIFT ALL BOATS?

9.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the research findings presented in previous chapters 5-8 in light of the literature reviewed in chapters 2 and 3. Moreover, it provides a backdrop to the conclusions and recommendations in the final chapter. This chapter develops central arguments based on the empirical findings and the literature reviewed, presented as 'super-narratives', to highlight the extent of their penetration into local government policy-making in relation to ICTs. A synthesis of the overlapping and 'tangled' theories and policy practices of the Network Society is provided to initiate the discussion on the 'super-narratives'.

9.1.1 Research design

The methodology was designed around a case study in the city of Manchester, the fourth most deprived local authority in England whose reputation in the field of digital development is recognised internationally. It is also an iconic entrepreneurial city (e.g. Ward, 2003). Furthermore, a corporate Manchester Improvement Programme (MIP) had commenced with the ambition to transform the way in which MCC delivers services.

Three themes were identified for the case study:

- 1) Digital urban strategy: "the competitive, yet inclusive" city
- 2) Technologies of transformation: the efficient city (top-down)
- 3) What makes you click – citizens and neighbourhoods (bottom-up)

These themes also broadly reflect the logic of the three empirical chapters 6, 7, and 8. Both quantitative and qualitative evidence was presented on how the city uses technology in urban governance and service delivery. Survey data as well as actual volumetrics/ channel data was used to ascertain the level of demand for electronic channels in Manchester. 32 semi-structured interviews were carried out, which included directors, managers, front-line officers, active citizens and councillors as well

as two residents' focus groups which were held in Levenshulme and Wythenshawe.

Chapter 5 focused on the benchmarking element. Helsinki was chosen as a European benchmark because of its reputation as a "knowledge economy star" (van Winden *et al*, 2007) and in particular because of the high citizen demand for e-government. Furthermore, Helsinki was arguably connected to Manchester through informal and formal European e-government policy and research networks which made knowledge exchange more meaningful between the two cities. In Helsinki, only qualitative methods were used, which included 20 interviews with various e-government stakeholders and front-line officers in neighbourhood services, a pilot survey and a focus group in Kontula, a district in East Helsinki.

9.2 A tangled web: spatial transformation and disaggregation in the Network Society

9.2.1 The knowledge economy is a dual economy

Revisiting the central tenets of chapter 2, in terms of public policy, ICTs have become part of the mainstream narrative around urban entrepreneurialism, rooted in a neoliberal conception celebrating the hegemony of the global market economy and thus competitiveness. Castells' Network Society thesis argues that spatial transformations are a consequence of a hierarchy between networked, or connected, places which are more connected to the "space of flows" (see 2.1.2).

Cities across Europe are gearing up towards a high-tech future; they market and position themselves as world class business destinations with vibrant knowledge-based economies and smart, business-like (and business-friendly) public services. These visions can have varying degrees of inclusiveness. Both Manchester and Helsinki have adopted bespoke policies to foster knowledge creation in the city for the greater good of all, but the knowledge economy can easily lead to elitist policy responses, such as science parks which Massey *et al* (1992) have criticised as "high-tech fantasies". A narrowly defined knowledge competitiveness programme may lead not only to regional disparity through promoting the interests of elites in some cities and not others, but furthermore, cities like Manchester are prone to creating a "*dual economy where large parts of the population are insufficiently skilled*" (van Winden *et al*, 2007, p. 541). This research has observed an imbalance within the physical and social fabric of the city, whereby the interests of knowledge elites are

routinely prioritised in any major development or investment, a strategy which is justified in terms of the knowledge competitiveness race. One reason for this is the wide acceptance of Florida's creative class thesis (see 2.8) where localities are competing over the same narrow pool of resources (investment, global talent) against each other. Castells' Network Society has perhaps inadvertently fuelled this global competition logic with its 'space of flows' argument.

In the knowledge economy, the commercial value of knowledge exchange and innovation dominates. As O'Connor and Gu (2010) concluded, the stranglehold of the 'economic logic' ultimately led to the demise of Manchester CIDS (see 6.3). No 'ideal case' was found in the Nordic capital, but arguably Helsinki's approach to the Information Society has been subtly more inclusive of its residents, as well as more attentive towards democratic and participatory technology development. This is an easier task in a city whose population overall has a higher basic level of education and less inequality. The benchmarking case study findings relating to this are summarised in section 9.4 below.

In tandem with the emergence of this so-called new economy (see 2.5), urban governance is in metamorphosis, where urban hubs, such as Manchester and Helsinki, are forming strategic alliances with neighbouring authorities to achieve agglomeration in order to boost economic competitiveness and growth in the 'functional economic area'. For public service delivery such 'metropolitan manoeuvres' (see 5.5 and 6.2) offer *economies of scale* to promote efficiency; ICTs have a distinct role in this by disaggregating service delivery from place.

9.2.2 Delegated democracy

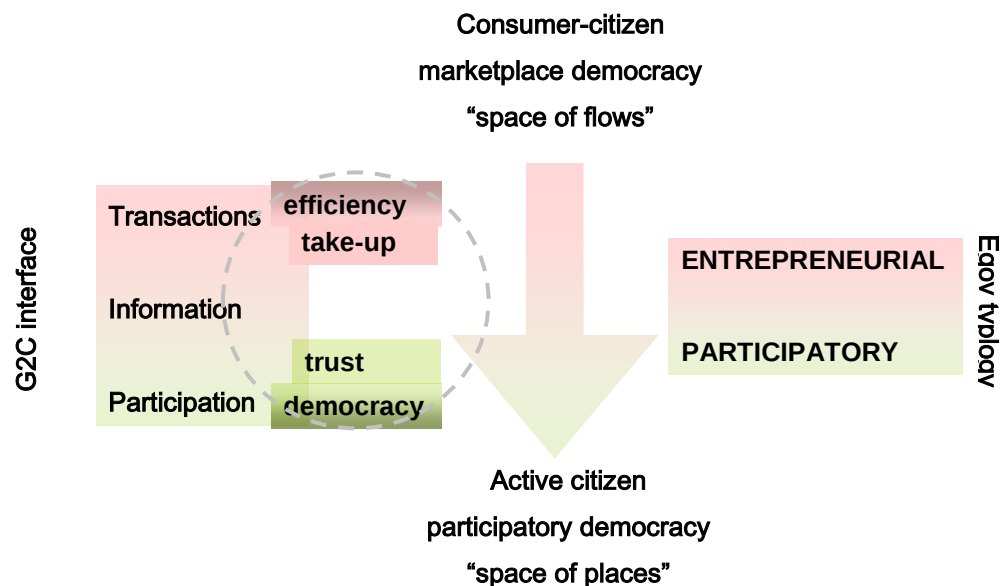
As argued by Castells (1996) the representative model of democracy is not functioning well in the Network Society, manifested e.g. in low voting turnouts, particularly at the local level²¹. Democratic theorists have documented a climate of "antipolitics" (Habermas, 2006) and mistrust between the citizens and politicians, while state functions are increasingly outsourced to third parties in openly neoliberal policies (Harvey, 2005; Swyngedow, 2005). Greater citizen cooperation is sought to infill the democratic deficit as the distance between decisions made in the public interest and the public itself is growing (e.g. Healey, 1999). It has been argued that

²¹ In Manchester local election turnout has been under 30% in recent years

ICTs could help in the process of legitimation through greater citizen involvement in politics particularly through the rising tide of Web 2.0 (e.g. Chadwick, 2009) but the observed trend of internet use goes against the grain of greater democratic involvement and public interest. This research has shown that consumerism and private interest influence both the supply and demand side of e-government.

The existing body of theoretical work on democratic governance has provided the point of departure and analytic framework for this study (see chapters 2.6 - 2.7). Current practices couched in the entrepreneurial and competitive policies pursued by governments have left a democratic deficit in their wake, and a collage of complex arms-length structures of the local state. The representative democratic institutions seem to hold less value as citizens and public administrations turn away from the public sphere towards more private forms of consumer-driven accountability between service providers and citizen-consumers (e.g. Aberbach and Christensen, 2005; Bang and Esmark, 2008). The conceptual framework for this research introduced in section 4.1.2 (see Figure 3 overleaf) brought together these characteristics of democracy and governance in the Network Society. The framework made a link between the technology agendas pursued by local government and how these tensions in governance were played out in the relationship between local government and the citizen, or the 'space of flows' and global capital on the one hand, and the 'space of places' and local communities on the other. It was discovered that the economic logic around competitiveness and operational efficiency of local government service delivery were systematically prioritised in the ICT policies, and that in such an environment citizens were seen primarily as customers. Conceptually, the consumer-citizens represent private interest rather than collective community interest, thus the ICT policies of local government reflect the fragmented or 'atomised' nature of communities in the Network Society. There is no causal relationship implied, however, the corporate ICT strategies have done very little to attempt to stem the tide of 'spatial transformation' which characterises the Network Society – although ICTs have been argued to have the potential to connect communities and create a reflexive space (see, for example Graham, 2002; Leadbeater, 2008).

Figure 3: Conceptual framework



Furthermore, the different, sometimes competing technology agendas were disconnected from each other. Different priorities and governance practices inside the Manchester Improvement Programme (MIP), the Central Technology Unit (CTU) and Manchester Digital Development Agency (MDDA) created an environment where cooperation was scarce and there were contradictions about the perceived role of the citizen and what technology ought to achieve in the local government context. The transformation programme that the MIP drove forward was an inward-looking agenda which failed to consider the relationship between the Council and citizens beyond anything other than transactional. The underpinning logic of this transformation was that citizen-consumers expect efficient services and ‘value for money’, and that more ‘efficiency’, as understood by policy makers, therefore increases the legitimacy of the Council through ‘customer satisfaction’. However, the MIP’s activities were typical of New Labour policies where a certain determinism about the favoured ‘policy fix’ created a climate of importance and need for these reforms which in reality failed to connect with the de facto ‘market’ of the services, the service users. Indeed the MIP had all but failed to interpret and communicate what ‘customer centricity’ meant in practice, in the context of local government, which was one of the main reasons for its lack of progress and impact. Furthermore, the MIP’s relationship with the CTU who were instrumental in the delivery of technology was fraught; the CTU’s modus operandi had been one of a typical bureaucratic unit. Priorities and targets were set according to centrally driven decisions about the allocation of resources, the model

was not wholly compatible with MIP's 'project management' culture. The working practices of the MIP prevailed in the sense that the CTU faced re-organisation and was brought under the direct line management of the MIP. Whether this will help to resolve the mismatch in the operational cultures remains to be seen.

MDDA, unlike the MIP and the CTU, operated at an 'arms length' and had to raise funds externally in order to exist. Therefore, its priorities came to an extent from the policy agendas of its funders, e.g. the various EU programmes or the Regional Development Agency. Of all three, MDDA had to be the most 'entrepreneurial' in the sense that it operated within a wider field than just the Whitehall-controlled modernisation agenda. MDDA was also the only one of the three organisations to have any direct contact with the people of Manchester through their digital engagement outreach activities. However, in terms of accountability through the representative systems of democracy, MDDA had only sporadic and issue-driven exposure to elected members. While MDDA had to secure its funding position through entrepreneurial bids, it was also expected to deliver digital engagement and outreach through their negotiated share of the (now disbanded) Working Neighbourhoods Fund. Simultaneously, they were also an active agent of Manchester's place-marketing through the 'global city' discourse around the promotion of high speed broadband and Manchester as a business destination, activity which has been found to be counter-intuitive from the perspective of social and digital inclusion. The realities and conflicting priorities under which the MIP and MDDA operated are crystallised in the two 'super-narratives' relating to governance in the Network Society in section 9.3 below.

9.3 Two super-narratives in local government ICT policy

Bang and Esmark (2008) see governance in the Network Society is a form of political communication, connecting individuals, power and knowledge. The governance literature in chapter 2.7 concluded that cities are not powerless in the face of globalisation, in the way that they are sometimes portrayed in the policy literature, an approach perhaps fuelled by the theory of the Network Society, according to its critics (Marcuse, 2002). Understanding governance as a political communication supports the analysis of local government ICT policy through the super-narratives laid out below.

The term super-narrative relates to the well-known concept of “TINA” (There Is No Alternative) in urban policy-making, which Harvey (2005, p. 12) associated with the neoliberal solutions popularised in Britain under the Conservative governments of Margaret Thatcher, and also explicit in the assaults on metropolitan councils described in chapter 6.2.1. The spirit of TINA was carried forward in the New Public Management school of public sector reform under New Labour. The Third Way, as it came to be known, became the new panacea, as the economic orthodoxies of the ‘old left’ were no longer held to be a credible option in a global, hyper-connected (political) economy (see 3.4). The Third Way variant of ‘TINA’ was perhaps softer and less uncompromising than its precursor; it could be described as There Is No (ideological) *Argument*, characterised by the managerial mantra ‘what matters is what works’.

9.3.1 Super-narrative 1: Economic growth and social inclusion

The diffusion of ICTs and superfast broadband promises better competitiveness and economic growth, as well as social inclusion and opportunity for all. In mainstream policies there is little disagreement about the correlation between economic growth and ICTs. Both the EU and OECD make the case the ICTs are a route not only to competitiveness, but also to better government, quality of life and social inclusion. However, urban policies converging around the knowledge economy and related theories (agglomeration, ‘creative class’) rely largely on positive externalities resulting from technological innovation, knowledge intensive and creative industries, to create an aura of desirability and prosperity around the entire urban area, thus epitomising the old adage that “A rising tide lifts all boats”, the idea behind ‘trickle down’ in urban regeneration (e.g. Robson, 1994). This super-narrative is based on an assumption that deprived areas would also benefit from proposed technology investments, yet high-tech cities around the world often show increasing inequality and uneven spatial development; what Castells described as spatial transformation (Castells, 1996; Graham, 2004; Graham and Marvin, 2001).

As high value activities contributing to economic growth are prioritised, ICTs are harnessed to serve the interests primarily of international business and intellectual elites. Whilst deprived neighbourhoods continue to be included in the discourse of social and economic inclusion, this has tended to exceed the extent of the actual inclusion in practice. In Manchester, the Corridor project (see 6.4.1) is an example of how democratic-inclusive values around the anti-neoliberal strategy of municipal digital infrastructure had to embrace the growth and place-marketing agenda to

become a viable investment. Cochrane *et al*'s (1996) assertion that it has become necessary to talk about growth to get grants seems to hold true. A superfast digital knowledge corridor is created in the heart of Manchester, a city which has already been criticised for its glorification of the “glitzy” city centre at the expense of its “out in the sticks” neighbourhoods, in the words of one elected member of the City Council (M23). However, simultaneously, many residents in deprived areas such as Wythenshawe show a readiness and an interest to use ICTs, e.g. Facebook, for personal reasons, but very limited interest in anything ‘to do with the council’.

The socio-spatial consequences of this infrastructure create fertile ground for future research, not the least attempting to detect and quantify any positive externalities that such flagship development may or may not have for the city's population as a whole.

9.3.2 Super-narrative 2: Efficiency and customer-centricity

This super-narrative promotes technologies of transformation, whereby the business of local government can be turned into a slicker, more business-like venture whilst also being customer-centric and responding to the needs of residents and giving them choice – a discourse very much steeped in the rhetoric of New Public Management (see chapter 3.4).

In terms of service improvement, the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) model centralises the customer point of contact, and the creation of Manchester's Town Hall service centre epitomises this centralisation. The future of the presence of MCC services in districts (neighbourhoods) is uncertain as access channels become corporate, be it call centres, online self-service, or the Town Hall service centre. We therefore find that technology-supported service modernisation is also linked to spatial transformation. The creation of the Combined Authority for Greater Manchester is likely to see even bigger pooling of resources, larger economies of scale, and a greater distance between the service users and the coordinating centre.

The MIP's intention to “put the customer at the heart of everything we do” is a powerful argument; it is omnipresent and yet a mystery to many people who come into contact with it. Consequently, semantic-conceptual problems and “lack of understanding” mar the “transformational journey” of the Council (see chapter 7.5). The theory of managerial rationalism put forward by Danziger *et al* (1982) demonstrates how customer-centricity and increased choice are unattainable through

top-down managerial strategy based on the belief that putting the right system in place will solve the problem of inefficiency. The result is a re-enforcement politics which typically strengthens the position of managers over customers (citizens) and elected representatives. We find corroboration with Barber's (1984, 2003) concern not only about "weak" democracy, but concern for the competence of *any* democratic vehicle, strong or weak, in a managerial model of public service delivery. This situation exemplifies the logic of these super-narratives, which marginalise opposing or conflicting points of view by enveloping their practical manifestations in a discursive veil of rationality and inevitability, and thereby appear to dispense with a need for political debate linked to wider *values*, as opposed to mere *selling points*. Typically, managerial rationality runs into problems in the implementation phase where user groups do not engage with the technology as envisaged (Campbell, 1996). The MIP was stifled by resistance and lack of buy-in from staff, who were not persuaded by the customer card as a selling point.

If it has become necessary to talk about growth to get grants in urban policy, it has become absolutely vital to talk about efficiency in technology implementation in local government. It is a most peculiar super-narrative, as the efficiency gains are demonstrably often modest given the size of the investment required, the short shelf life of technologies, and subsequent maintenance/upgrading costs and human resource required to keep systems live. Furthermore, as one Finnish interviewee highlighted, "*electronic services as such are going to have a marginal impact on cost-efficiency of local government, the cost of education, social services and health care are so enormous*" (H11, see 5.5.5). If the cost of project failures was factored in, a zero-sum scenario would be likely (in monetary terms). Yet the business of government is essentially about processing information; no-one disputes that ICTs have become the life blood of modern public administration.

Here, a second strand of future research emerges with great potential for action research methods; alternative, socially constructed understandings of the value ICTs bring to local councils, with a view to guiding future technology implementation.

9.3.3 The dismal science of economics

The two super-narratives of local government technologies described above were both associated with 'spatial transformations' characteristic of the Network Society. They are also both deeply rooted in the neoliberal mantra of economic growth, and

ICTs are thought to offer this through increased productivity. Yet, economists have argued about the link between increased productivity and ICT ever since the USA's strong economic performance in the 1990's and the "Solow's paradox" debunking the role of ICT in productivity growth (see 2.5.1). In any area of economics there hardly ever is consensus; as Winston Churchill famously declared: *"If you put two economists in a room you get two opinions, unless one of them is Lord Keynes in which case you get three"*. Therefore the argument about the causal link between ICT investment and productivity continues. However, it has been proven that there is some correlation between the management of ICT implementation and productivity at the micro (or firm) level (Draca *et al*, 2006). In other words, technology implementation, and therefore the role of management at the micro level, seems to explain productivity gains through ICT.

The disagreement in economic terms about the role of ICT in productivity gains means that technology implementation undertaken solely on economic grounds is a castle built on sand. The wider social, organisational and political values embedded in any local authority technology project should be carefully appraised, by, for example, asking basic questions such as 'What is the exact basis of the case being made for the employment of ICT in this setting?' or 'What input have different groups, such as end users, citizens and elected members had in the actual problem-definition in the first place, and in identifying subsequent solutions?'. Such questions should be asked according to a socially constructed view of technology (Bijker *et al*, 1987, see 4.1.4). Even if inefficiency or cost emerges as a shared issue, then a (new) ICT solution should not be considered automatically as the answer to the problem unless the end users have a shared understanding of the root causes of the inefficiency, and the proposed solutions.

As for larger ICT infrastructure interventions, the same logic applies. The linear assumption that NGA or basic broadband will lead to competitiveness and growth is technologically deterministic. The benchmarking in chapter 5 showed that other factors affecting the capacity of an area to leverage the benefits from the infrastructure are more important than the infrastructure itself.

9.3.4 What happened to the democratic ideals?

Taken from the perspective of these super-narratives, the entire technology agenda is potentially anti-democratic. A circuitous chain of outsourcing is set in motion which

impacts upon the transparency of the democratic decision-making process and on the accountability of decision-makers themselves to the electorate. This chain operates as follows: a minority of the electorate outsource decision-making to elected representatives whose influence and general competence is marginalised in an NPM environment, which actively seeks to further outsource public services to non-state sectors. Technologies of transformation strengthen the managerial model; they are implemented to increase management and performance information at the disposal of decision-makers, with the good intention of saving taxpayers' money. However the potential effect of this process is the subordination of the wider duty of elected representatives and public bodies to act in the public interest to the logic of the growth/ efficiency agenda, by disproportionately loading the informational and operational basis for their decisions on the side of these managerial goals.

At the very front-line of the local state, the interface between e-government and citizens also raises questions about the democratic credentials of the reforms undertaken in the name of these super-narratives. This research has shown that local e-government is close to being marginal to the lived experience of Manchester residents. Less than half the population report getting in touch with the Council at all, of those who do, approximately 6% use online channels. Castells' (1996) vision for the local authority as a democratic anchor in the "space of flows" seems to be a distant dream for Manchester. The outsourcing of public services and governing "outside the state" (Swyngedow, 2005) make the local authority less relevant to the everyday lives of its residents. However, the glass could be viewed as half full; almost 50% of people do get in touch with the Council in some way or other (telephone, usually) which is significantly more than vote in the local election (30%).

From a community empowerment/ horizontal mobilisation perspective, proponents of the sharing and collaborative potential of the internet have argued that the online environment can be inclusive, innovative and anti-capitalist. The way technology has been democratised through Web 2.0/ user-created content and the explosion of social media has been cited as evidence, for some, of the green shoots of an inclusive and participatory trajectory (e.g. Leadbeater, 2008; Shirky, 2008). However it is worth asking whether this is anything new. An air of radical democratisation of society has been part and parcel of technological utopias or "urban fantasies" (Graham, 2004, see 2.4) since before the commercialisation of the internet. The internet arguably has been more disruptive as a technology in the world of business, and possibly in the

organisation of political campaigning as seen in Barack Obama's campaign (see chapter 2.5.2 – 2.5.3) but political parties, too, are a form of business enterprise. In the arena of the local state and citizenship, there was scant evidence found in this research that any disruptive technologies were revolutionising citizenship in the electronically networked city.

There are traces of evidence of such technology development in MCC, beyond the “radical roots” of digital development grounded in socially inclusive and progressive principles. A number of small projects, the “paddle boats” of MDDA, continue to support social inclusion and innovation outside the growth agenda. Inside the corporate council, too, there is evidence of micro trends in this direction, beyond the mainstream customer services (CRM) programme, notably Manchester Libraries, were making use of the interactive qualities of Web 2.0 and creating informal civic links with residents via Facebook, blogs, and popular services such as digital photographs of historic Manchester, for example. The Libraries also hosted the Lifelong Learning service, providing citizens with an entirely customised learning opportunity for Internet and/ or general PC skills. Indeed, skills associated with the use of Facebook were among the most popular learning requests in Wythenshawe.

However, in practice the affinity of citizen-consumers towards social media in the mainstream is not necessarily socially inclusive or democratising, from a political perspective. The focus groups revealed that what makes private individuals ‘click’ are usually private interests; connecting with their nearest and dearest, pursuing hobbies/interests, or buying goods. The focus group participants gave a resounding testimonial to the life-changing potential of the internet from a private individual's perspective, but an equally doubtful outlook on any public good emanating from its increased use. Social inclusion and empowerment through technology seems to be limited to combating the experience of relative inequality. Technology is a status symbol and a means to ‘being connected’ in a consumer society, but the question arises, connected to what, to whom, and for what purpose? To what extent is this actually empowering people to act collectively as citizens rather than merely as individual consumers?

Looking to the future, as the price of technology rapidly decreases, for example mobile phone penetration rate has already exceeded 100% in the UK since 2004 (the Guardian, 2010a), it is not a huge leap of faith to think that (almost) no one will be without the internet in two generations time, as speculated by the Levenshulme focus

group. Mobile broadband penetration is currently highest in Finland at 17%, UK at 6.7% is above EU average which is just under 6% as at January 2010 (EC, 2010b). With respect to the foci of this study, this trend therefore begs the question of whether society will turn out to be more inclusive, with stronger democracy and when and if, for example, mobile internet exists in virtually everyman's pocket? What would public service delivery look like in a fully networked society? Furthermore, is the internet truly as vital as water and gas, as was argued by the former Prime Minister Gordon Brown in summer 2009 (Brown, 2009)? We return to these questions at the end of this chapter.

Next, the benchmarking lessons are reflected upon in light of the research questions set for the high performing 'knowledge economy star' context.

9.4 Benchmarking lessons

9.4.1 International indicators

The overarching message from the benchmarking indicators of knowledge competitiveness can be summarised in the following quotation from a Manchester digital stakeholder: *"Important simple point about infrastructure, it's not what you've got but what you do with it"* (see chapter 6.4.2).

The benchmarking exercise reviewed widely disseminated knowledge competitiveness indicators, which debunked the myth that fast broadband translates into competitiveness. North American regions dominate the top 40 of the WKCI (Huggings *et al*, 2008) which cannot be explained by fast broadband. The WKCI stresses that there are many more facets to knowledge competitiveness than fast broadband. Much of the overall knowledge competitiveness is backed up by the "basic requirements" pillar which comprises institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic stability, health and primary education. Of European regions, those with the narrowest digital divides also made it to the top 20 knowledge competitiveness regions (areas in Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands among EU nations). These countries also had a more balanced e-government demand/supply ratio (see Figure 7 in 5.3.1) whereas in the UK the supply is disproportionately high compared with low citizen demand. Conversely, UK citizens use e-commerce and social networking sites most intensively in Europe.

Therefore, places would be well-advised to address issues of socio-economic inequality as a priority for improving their knowledge competitiveness. It has been argued that there is no digital divide as such, that the digital divide is largely a symptom of socio-economic divide (CLG, 2008; Davies, 2005). This is not to say that digital divides are not worthy of focusing on, merely that sweeping statements about economic inequality do not fully address the spectrum of digital divides. Age is the biggest digital divider in Europe, over and beyond economic inactivity. In the UK, low education was also a high risk factor for digital exclusion. It is important to note that across Europe, the bottom income quartile cited “don’t need” most often as the reason for not having broadband at home. This raises questions not only about income inequality, but wider social and political dimensions of the differences between the digitally engaged and disengaged. Questions of the state of democracy as reflected in citizens’ efficacy - their relationship with the civil society and the state - would appear to be important here. Indeed Fukuyama (1995) has argued that healthy democracies tend to be conducive to healthier economies. And yet, whilst the debate on digital divides and social inclusion, perhaps rightly, revolve around socio-economic inequality, this research has found that ICT policies tend to focus too narrowly on the economic value of technology.

9.4.2 Nordic network society

From a governance perspective, the Finnish state and the city of Helsinki have moved in many respects towards neoliberalism since the 1990s (Taipale, 2009). However, it is argued that the Finnish state still holds onto an egalitarian Nordic welfare state ideology which has slowed the adoption of neoliberal practices rooted in global capitalism (Pelkonen, 2003). Furthermore, the Finnish municipal sector has a high degree of local competence by virtue of autonomy guaranteed by the constitution, even if recent reforms appear to have left them with little else choice but to collaborate with neighbouring municipalities in order to be able to afford statutory service provision.

The discussion here focuses on the strengths of the Finnish case study, in order to draw out any relevant policy recommendations. Chapter 5 gives a fuller account of different nuances discovered during the research.

Helsinki’s IT strategy and implementation embraced the concept of the citizen and the local resident as service-user, and there is arguably a deeper truth to this which goes

beyond semantics. The IT strategy identified participation and citizen engagement as one of the flagship developments without efficiency strings attached. The democratic deficit was taken seriously by managers, politicians and active residents. The city's IT department had asked itself the question "What is the message you want to give to citizens?"

This study found that the practitioners of Helsinki City Council thought of e-government as an area of investment and expenditure, efficiency benefits would be long-term and often indirect. The local practitioners also thought that Helsinki was lagging in customer-centric developments, acknowledging that much of this policy originates from the UK. It is fair to say that at the time of the fieldwork in 2008, the City still delivered its services on a silo-based approach, with "pots of money" dictating the scope and allegiances of programmes.

However, technical interoperability on a city-wide scale as well as on a city-regional scale was a priority in 2007-2010, making the delivery of shared services in the city-region a realistic proposition. Many services with e-channels were already integrated on the metropolitan scale, such as public transport. Indeed technical development seems to be one of Helsinki's key competencies. Partly this competence could be attributed to resourcing; the IT department had more staff than Manchester's. However, the corporate capability of the MIP (see chapter 7.2.1) more than matched this resource. When asked, the Director in charge of Helsinki's IT services said that they did not subscribe to "catchphrases" and believed in doing few things at a time, but getting credit for doing those well (see chapter 5.5.3).

The ethos of Helsinki's IT Strategy was different to that of the MIP. Helsinki aspired to achieve efficacy rather than efficiency in service delivery, which often translated into more inclusive and reflexive developments. The approach to managing technology implementation was also fundamentally different. The Economic and Planning Centre authored the overall IT Strategy, however, the individual departments were responsible for their technology implementation. Comparing operations in Manchester and Helsinki the question arises as to whether the MIP was trying to achieve too much too soon?

From the citizen-perspective, the reasons behind high demand for e-government were difficult to ascertain, but many factors were identified as likely contributors. The

telephone has not mainstreamed as a service channel due to the absence of corporate call centres in the council. The 'halo effect' of using the internet in one area radiating to other areas means that user confidence, or trust in the new technology increases. Banks in Finland have led the way in directing their customers online by a steep pricing policy. Furthermore, Finnish consumers adopt new technologies faster (alongside their Nordic neighbours) and also allocate a higher proportion of the household budget on technology/gadgets than EU citizens on average. The population as a whole enjoys a very high standard of education. Perhaps most significant, however, is the level of trust towards public administration, which provided a stark contrast for the lack of trust expressed by Manchester residents. It is argued that in a society where the threshold for technology adoption is low and generally citizens trust the administrative processes to be competent, they are more likely to rely on mediated channels.

Furthermore, whilst Finland is an affluent nation, it has the highest rate of PIAP use per capita (albeit declining like in the rest of Europe). It is argued here that the high use of PIAPs is indicative of a more inclusive network society rooted in the 'space of places'. Furthermore, the Finnish state made access to broadband a universal service obligation by summer 2010, which would seem to support the view of connectivity as a public good (rather than just a private good).

Many of the respondents to the pilot survey, interviewees and focus group participants, felt that the *niciest* way to deal with the Council would be in person, but that as that was often not practical or even possible, e-government offered the most convenient, cost- and time-efficient method. Nevertheless, citizens were critical of the information society and the automated self-service models proliferating in the consumer experience. Many said that they sought added value from personal customer service, being tired of 'googling' for information when they wanted specific personal advice relating to a service or a product. As far as local democracy was concerned, most residents preferred something 'tangible' as opposed to online.

To conclude, Finnish local authorities are constitutionally autonomous, therefore perhaps also more concerned about the state of democracy and local accountability than in the UK. This appears to fit the conceptual framework for this study which posited that a virtuous circle between trust and participatory approaches to e-government development could contribute to higher take-up of e-government and

therefore increased (service) efficiency in a democracy where citizens experience more efficacy (see Figure 3).

9.5 Managing customer relations at the Manchester City Council

The aim of the Manchester Improvement Programme (MIP) was to transform the Council, described illustratively by one interviewee as “turning the supertanker around” (M4), however progress has been painfully slow and arduous as documented in chapter 7.

The transformational government programme, building on the legacy of the local e-government targets, was influenced by two major New Labour policy initiatives: the Varney Agenda on the one hand (focusing on efficiency targets), and the long-standing Local Government Modernisation Agenda (LGMA) on the other. The LGMA focussed heavily on customer-centric public management and joined-up government, both of which technology seemed uniquely positioned to provide solutions for. Two relationships are key to understanding the trials and tribulations of the MIP: the relationship with Council staff (MIP’s customers) on the one hand, and citizens (the customers of the Council) on the other.

9.5.1 Customer Relationship Management

The case study of the MIP investigated the implementation of a universally popular technical solution in English local authorities, a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. Environment on Call (EoC) was the first incarnation of this, where the corporate call centre model was piloted (see chapter 7.3.1). The research found that the model is arguably not customer-centric, instead, it is ‘customer-service-operative-centric’. The customer service operatives are at the heart of the system, acting as a broker between service providers and citizen-customers. Currently, in the absence of end-to-end online services, the telephone is the most efficient method to handle customer contact as it results in the quickest transaction over the CRM system, compared with inputting details on the basis of emails or web forms. Is it then a good thing, from MCC’s perspective, that the vast majority of residents use the telephone to contact the council? Perhaps not, given how much more efficient true self-service channels would be, considered purely on the basis of transaction costs. However, there is an abject lack of interest from residents in using online channels and the reason for this is largely to do with lack of trust. The National

Take-up study showed that even when customers made enquiries about environmental services online, they chose to telephone to request the service (see chapter 8.2).

9.5.2 Managerial rationality

Why has progress been slow on the transformational journey? The literature in chapter 3.2 suggested that the implementation of managerial-rationalist technology projects is typically marred by delays, failures and even abandonment (Campbell, 1996). The SAP CRM experience in Manchester provided a text book example of this.

The literature on e-government suggests that IT project failures are almost exclusively management failures (Gauld and Goldfinch, 2006; Davies, 2005). Reasons for this are multiple, starting from technical skills to organisational culture, capacity, complexity of the local council, political biases, funding constraints, performance framework and so on – they are too numerous to focus on individually. Instead, the theoretical framework allows us to consider the problems faced by the MIP from the perspective of the values that underpin the transformation programme and its relationship with the citizen.

A socially constructed approach has helped to reveal that every user group coming into contact with technology tend to interpret the system and its purpose in their own way, regardless of the 'super narrative' used by managers to sell the idea. In the case of the MIP the super-narrative focussed on customer-centricity and efficiency. This provided an example of reinforcement politics where managerial control is increased using something else, in this case the 'customer card' as a smoke screen. Therefore the user groups often feel undermined by the new system, resulting in resistance and disengagement. Unsurprisingly, the external audit of the MIP highlighted staff relations as a key area for improvement. The service improvement decisions made on the basis of a business case and return-on-investment by project managers put the MIP into an unpopular and difficult position with staff. Ultimately, the cooperation and willingness of the people (customers of the MIP as well as customers of the council) to engage in service improvement process can be more transformative than a piece of new technology imposed onto a reluctant audience. The transformative power of Web 2.0 or social media comes directly from its popularity; it is transformative because so many people use it, not because of any inherent technical features, for example. Without user engagement, transformation will not happen.

In the experience of the MIP, some service areas have seen incremental improvements when the users of technology have been allowed to decide how they make use of that technology, such as in the case of the Content Management System. The ward coordination support officers had decided to improve and standardise the online interface of their service. The CMS was not seen as “interfering” or “imposed” on their work so it was welcomed. The overall Ward Coordination experience showed, however, that the corporate systems were not able to coordinate customer-related information which resulted in parallel processes where “things get lost” (M13). Nor was the governance culture amenable towards incorporating “bottom-up” decisions. The processes established were instead confined largely to the task of delivering customer satisfaction.

The MIP shows that new technology rarely resolves existing organisational, cultural and skills issues; on the contrary, existing problems are likely to be highlighted. Joined-up government is about managing, sharing and linking up vast amounts of public management information in a meaningful way. This, it is argued here, is not a technical exercise, but a social one. The ability to govern the social interaction between ‘silos’, services and citizens in the Network Society is the single biggest challenge faced by local government on their transformational journey.

9.5.3 Citizen-consumer dilemma

Next, we turn our attention to the citizen-consumer of public services. Chapter 7 concluded that the MIP treats citizens as customers. The customer philosophy emanates from New Public Management (NPM), which is associated with a number of problems described as the citizen-consumer dilemma (Aberbach and Christensen, 2005). NPM policy is based on an ideal type market efficiency assumption that a private sector firm responds to customers’ needs and provides the highest level of customer satisfaction whilst expending as little resources as possible, because it is in their commercial interest to do so. Stakeholders in Manchester thought “this kind of attitude is rife” in government (see chapter 6.4.1).

Considering that the markets can fail and that the private sector should not be assumed to automatically deliver what is in the best interest of the taxpayer, it is argued here that local government technologies have been disproportionately harnessed to realise a customer philosophy at the expense of more democratic or

inclusive principles. A CRM system is designed to increase management information about service performance and the customer, building a profile of the customer. This could be useful in predicting customers' needs, or influencing their choices as often happens in the market. Customer satisfaction becomes easier to achieve once the provider knows more about their customers. It would be more empowering for the customer to see and control the information that is accumulated about him/her first, as expressed by the Levenshulme focus group (see chapter 8.5.3, part 4), but the current CRM model is not designed to do this.

If the local authority's objective is to improve the quality of life of its residents and to address socio-economic inequalities, then 'customer insight' should aspire to a thorough understanding of the reasons behind the various needs of customers which generate demand for, and reliance on, public services in the first place, rather than just anticipating various customer needs and responding to those. This would be congruent with the place-shaping agenda promoted by the Lyons Enquiry (HM Treasury, 2006a) which sought to stimulate a more proactive relationship between governance, people and place. In this vein, Healey (1999) advocates place-focused discourses in governance, which in the light of this research, could be supported through technologies that build 'area profiles' rather than 'customer profiles'. This would also help to link public ICTs to the 'space of places' (Castells, 1996).

There is nothing wrong in a public service aiming to meet their customers' needs through pre-empting requirements, increased automation and better coordination between services. However, it is wholly inadequate for local government to measure its success solely through customer satisfaction for the reasons outlined above, lest it gives up on democratic governance altogether and opts for corporate governance instead. Furthermore, customer satisfaction is not the same as trust, and trust is currently one of the biggest barriers to an increased take-up of e-government channels by citizens, as concluded in chapter 8. Low citizen trust and the resulting low take-up of self-service channels strengthen the current status quo of the corporate contact centre model and the "customer-service-operative-centric" model, which ultimately also hampers the effort to meet efficiency targets.

In sum, citizenship in the electronically networked city is disproportionately expressed in ways which further the fragmented private interests of consumer-citizens, or of the managerial logic serving the efficiency/growth agenda.

9.6 Looking forward

9.6.1 Urban service delivery in an age of austerity

Graham and Dominy's (1991) early commentary on the potential of ICTs for urban service delivery is eerily applicable to the present UK context almost 20 years later: *"at a time of unprecedented fiscal austerity, political turbulence and technological change, there are grave dangers in blindly 'planning for the information city'"* (Hepworth and Graham 1989, cited in Graham and Dominy, 1991 p. 188). Graham discussed the internal use of telecommunications for *"cost effective delivery of consumer-orientated services in an increasingly competitive environment"* (ibid, p. 188). He also highlighted the LA's role in fostering horizontal communication between citizens, organisations and local government, as well as information services for small local businesses otherwise excluded from the benefits of ICTs because of the cost involved (ibid). Graham predicted accurately the twin-track of digital development and the Manchester Improvement Programme, or corporate ICTs within councils.

A decade later, the observations made by Graham (2002) that dominant uses of ICT exacerbated urban polarisation seem to hold true in the Manchester case context in 2010. The Network Society predicates that being *connected* to other individuals, opportunities, services, information, resources - in other words "networks of opportunity" - is critical to an individual's economic and social wellbeing (6, 1997). As posited in Chapter 6, Manchester prides itself in being the most connected city in the UK. Manchester's connectedness is visible through the city's successful 'grant coalitions' at policy level (see chapter 6.2), but it is questionable how connected its neighbourhoods are, given the extent of deprivation in the city.

Deprivation and increasing polarisation in the city-region's neighbourhoods is recognised in the Greater Manchester Strategy (AGMA, 2009). However, the remedies are found first and foremost in the increased competitiveness of residents in the job market in the current and future economy. Out of eight priorities for improving life chances in deprived communities, the first five are to do with employment; the last three are about crime, the physical environment and finally public services (AGMA, 2009).

Of course the focus of this research is public services and citizenship. There is a great deal of evidence to support the argument that the Network Society favours those who

are already connected, educated and well-resourced, and the Best Value Survey findings suggest that e-government is no exception to this rule. In light of the low take-up of electronic channels among the population who arguably rely on public services most (social tenants, the economically inactive, the elderly), the planned efficiency gains from automated self-service channels are in practice very difficult to realise in Manchester, as elsewhere. This is at the heart of the demand/ supply paradox in e-government in the UK. The picture is particularly alarming for the older population given that internet skills have been shown to correlate negatively with age (Hargittai, 2002). Taking into consideration empirical findings showing that over 45s are less likely to access the internet (Ofcom, 2007, see Figure 8), there seems to be a growing double disadvantage for the older population related to both access to ICTs and skills. This presents a real challenge for public services in the face of an ageing population. It is here that the interests of the corporate council/ service improvement, and social inclusion/ digital development converge.

The demand/supply paradox goes beyond concerns about the digital divide. It has been recognised in the literature that the digital divide is too narrow a concept to describe the complexities which determine an individual's potential to make use of the internet, with manifold challenges made to the straightforward assumption that access to ICT equipment, connectivity and basic computer literacy will bridge the digital divide. However, there must be a willingness and desire on the individual's part to engage with the online environment to step onto the bridge provided. The EC benchmarking showed that a perceived lack of need was the most popular reason for not having broadband at home (see 5.3.2). A proportion of the digital 'have-nots' are in fact 'will-nots'; *"those who have but prefer not"* (Ryder, 2007, p. 129, see 3.5.5). Applying this distinction to the UK e-government sphere, the contrast between the high use of e-commerce and social networking and the low take-up of e-government strongly suggests that the simple majority of the UK population are e-government "will-nots": citizens who have the internet but prefer not to use it for e-government.

Considering the previous threads of discussion in this chapter that transformation is unlikely to happen without broad support and participation by service providers as well as citizens, the super-narrative of efficiency and customer-centricity for e-government seems hollow. Not only frontline service providers, but also citizens are reluctant to use top-down technologies. In this light, an argument emerges for re-interpreting the basis and assumptions of technology implementation in local government. Furthermore, it is clear that the MIP would have to be much more transparent about its

intentions regarding staffing levels if it is to win trust and support in the workforce.

9.6.2 Metropolitan trend: agglomeration and economies of scale

Moving onto consider the spatial transformation and disassociation between everyday activities and spatial propinquity in the Network Society, the Manchester case study evidenced a scalar transformation towards a larger metropolitan unit through the formal ratification of the city-region pilot and the agreement to form the Combined Authority in 2011. Simultaneously, in the benchmarking case study, Helsinki city-region was putting in place new governance arrangements for the wider metropolitan area. Despite the fundamental differences in the governance and constitutional arrangements for local government in Manchester and Helsinki, similar attitudes towards scope and scale were identified. Agglomeration may be the force behind city-regional economics and driver of the neoliberal converging of policy interests around the growth narrative, but in terms of public services, the metropolitan model offers *economies of scale* where services can be procured more efficiently.

In terms of AGMA collaboration and ICTs development, the view is put forward during the interviews that *“it seems that all LAs in AGMA are delivering very similar services, technologically for example all council websites could be the same, all these local variations are not needed”* (M5). The comment seemed ahead of its time in 2008, but with the ever tighter metropolitan cooperation looming close, IT departments, alongside other back office functions are likely to be early victims of the austerity measures.

As noted in chapter 2.8.1, city-regions have been identified as having specific problems with democratic accountability. In this light, it is easy to see how this could lead to unwelcome spatial transformation in the city-region as well as to exacerbating the trend of ‘marketplace democracy’, already evident in the existing local e-government development. The final chapter makes policy recommendations taking into account the climate of austerity and the city-regional trend.

9.6.3 A peek into the future

The overarching message from this extensive study of technology, its implementation and use by local government and citizens is that technology can be bent into many shapes by its producers and users, and that this is often done in internally

counterpoising ways. Technology has a habit of spawning entirely unanticipated and potentially disruptive and paradoxical outcomes. The final section of the discussion chapter is dedicated to the precarious task of attempting to anticipate how technology and society may develop, based on the experience and insights gained through the course of this study. It is a tall order; given that even Manchester's 'digital revolutionary' Shaun Fensom did not foresee the commercialisation of the internet when he pioneered the Community Information Network in Manchester.

The opposing pulls of information sharing and privacy protection may well turn out to be one of those paradigm-changing paradoxes. People continue to enjoy the sharing of intimate details through networked social media (e.g. Flickr, Twitter, Facebook), however, it has recently been predicted that in the no-too-distant future people may find it necessary to change their identities in order to escape their digital footprints (the Guardian, 2010d). Perhaps we are still witnessing a time where information sharing is a major stumbling block in the public sector, whereas outside the state information sharing is the norm. As Charles Leadbeater (2008) argues, "You are what you share". The MIP highlighted the lack of an information sharing culture as one of their biggest obstacles. Once those barriers are removed, the question is how far will it swing the other way and what might the unintended outcomes be of relaxing data protection in local government?

Electronic tagging used to be, and still is, a punitive method used for monitoring offenders' whereabouts. Now free citizens are downloading place-tracking applications onto their mobile phones, allowing them to broadcast their location on the World Wide Web day and night, an innovation which would have been dismissed as the stuff of science fiction not too long ago such. Paradigms shift.

A second question mark hangs over one of the major themes of this research, namely the digital divide. Currently, widening access to the internet is seen, perhaps rightly, as a way to combat social and economic exclusion. But what happens when virtually everyone has access to the internet? Online technologies have become truly ubiquitous and universally affordable, no longer the privilege of those with 'iPhones' or 'blackberries'. At the start of this chapter the question was asked whether this is likely to lead to a more inclusive and democratic society? Based on the current values in technology development the predicted answer to this question would be no. In practice these technologies are primarily harnessed for maximising profit and private (consumer) interest. The outcomes are therefore likely to reflect these values.

Graham and Marvin's (2001) title '*Splintering urbanism*' argued that "sorting software" had infiltrated public and private spheres, covertly sorting citizen-consumers into first and second class, the underclass being the ones who fall outside the networked sphere altogether, whilst the elites use electronic networks to their advantage. It is plausible that once online technology is adequately commonplace, elites will have moved elsewhere, turning the idea of the digital divide on its head. Early signs of economic elites securing personal contact and the rest being ushered to automated channels can already be detected in parts of this research. To draw on the benchmarking case study, where the information society is arguably at a more advanced stage, the banks have already achieved this, and most citizens were sold on the idea of "convenience". Yet in Wythenshawe we heard testimonials from residents on how it was more convenient to pop into the local branch. Furthermore, in Helsinki the assumption was widely held that social housing applications could only be submitted online. The question therefore arises, would someone buying a luxury apartment expect to (have to) submit an online application, or would they expect personal service from an estate agent? The logic is simple, self-service is cheaper, personal service costs more.

Consider the effects of such a development on, for example, education, where personal tutoring could be bought by those who can afford it, mainstream learners being in "virtual classrooms" only. The popular push is currently towards more online learning, which is seen by some as superior. In Helsinki one of the flagship initiatives (see chapter 5.5.3) was to increase e-learning and digital material in schools. The US Department of Education (2009) claimed that online learners beat traditional learners in tested performance, an assertion which was based on a study primarily of adult learners, a factor which is key to understanding why the results; those with online skills in the adult population currently represent the economically, socially and politically better off. This picture will undoubtedly look different once the entire population has to do learning, and much more, online. At the higher education tier, UK universities have recently expressed concern that a "two-tier system" is emerging where only a small group of elite students can afford "traditional" campus-based university tuition, with a plethora of distance learning emerging as a more cost-efficient option (The BBC, 2010b)

So if we examine the previous prime minister's claim that "Internet will become as vital as water and gas" (Brown, 2009), could this mean that life chances are seriously

hindered by, and that even ill health or lack of education may result from, digital exclusion? Floridi (2007) discusses such a possibility in his futurologist essay on the Information Society. In essence, Floridi predicts that the biosphere, or the life-supporting system of the planet, is becoming increasingly informational, converging with 'infosphere'. Floridi predicts that the divide between the denizens of the infosphere and the rest will grow in future; the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. He also predicts that increasing informationalisation results in "no right to ignore" because of the volume of "metainformation" about the availability of information, which results in a "steady increase in agents' responsibilities" (*ibid*, p. 60).

There lies the future technology paradox predicted in response to this study. Any 'mainstream' services subjected to commercial and competitive principles, this includes swaths of public services, will be delivered exclusively online. It will become, as Floridi predicts, essential to have access to the 'infosphere' to guarantee the accepted minimum standard of wellbeing. It is unlikely that we will end up with a more egalitarian society. The economic elites will have secured 'offline' services, and they will perhaps rely on brokers to wade through the 'white noise' of information overload. The underclass are still likely to be the ones without internet skills. For the majority of the population this may well be a 'convenient' and acceptable outcome.

And what of the democratic deficit and the limping representative model of democracy? Peter Kellner, the YouGov pollster, is concerned that the crowds expect instant democracy in the digital age; a direct channel to their elected institutions and instant decisions, based on the immediacy of digital communications. But democracy is a 'sticky' process; there is nothing instant about it. The application of consumer-orientated, convenience-driven expectations to democracy is misguided. The following quotation is from Kellner, who speaks against the popular notion of 'direct democracy':

"Direct democracy is superficially attractive. Politicians think it puts them in touch with the people, and it is popular with an electorate now used to being asked its opinions, not least through popular votes on programmes like Britain's Got Talent and Big Brother. But it hollows out the accountability and legitimacy of parliament just when these should be strengthened. Indeed, taken together these mooted reforms could lead us down a slippery slope towards the California model, where referendums and recalls have destabilised politics, seen schools and hospitals go broke, and civil liberties threatened." (Kellner, 2009)

It is likely that that in the Network Society there be will be an increase in demand for

this kind of 'instant democracy' which is inspired by private entertainment, consumption lifestyles and media. Evidence of such popular votes is emerging under the coalition government's approach to 'crowdsourcing' policy. For the sake of a stronger local democracy, these are precisely the trends that the information city should avoid when planning the next phase of modernisation with the help of technology.

This chapter is closed with a call for speed humps in the information superhighway in the interest of a stronger democracy and a more inclusive 'infosphere'. Furthermore, the super-narratives driving technology development in local government need to be challenged if local government is to remain a vehicle for democratic governance. The subordination of the decision making processes to the managerial rationalism of 'TINA' perpetuates the inequalities and the unstable power structures of neoliberalism in the local government sphere. Furthermore, it is likely to continue to be resisted and/or ignored by user groups and citizens, which fundamentally undermines any transformative potential of the new technology.

10 CONCLUSIONS

10.1 Aim and objectives

The overall aim of the research was to examine the balance between the economic and social imperatives of technology development in the electronically networked city, through the lens of citizenship. With reference to the theory of the Network Society, the role of local government was investigated vis-à-vis citizens.

There were five objectives for this research as follows:

- 1) To examine local government ICT strategies and how they link with wider urban governance.
- 2) To explore how city services are delivered to, and accessed by, citizens in a local e-government environment.
- 3) To undertake a benchmarking study (of objectives 1 and 2) in a European context.
- 4) To establish the extent to which e-government mechanisms are successful in delivering the economic and social 'twin aims' of technology relating to service improvement and enabling local participation and empowerment.
- 5) To make policy recommendations emanating from the case study and the benchmarking exercise.

Furthermore, three broad themes were followed throughout the research reflecting the logic of the three Manchester case study chapters:

- 1) The competitive, yet inclusive, city
- 2) Efficient, yet citizen-centric, city
- 3) The paradox of supply and demand

The next section discusses the conclusions of this research based on these aims and objectives in the political and economic context of late 2010.

10.1.1 Drawing conclusions

In the course of the fieldwork and write-up of this study, a major global financial crisis triggered a recession in the second quarter of 2008 which coincided with a change in focus from 'e-society' or 'e-government' towards digital economy in policy rhetoric both in Europe and in the UK. This was marked by the launch of the Digital Strategy in 2009, followed by the Digital Economy Bill which received Royal Assent in April 2010. In May 2010, the general election resulted in a hung parliament. A coalition government of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats took office after the 'long decade' of New Labour whose policies were largely referred to throughout this research. The unprecedented fiscal austerity measures introduced by the new government will affect local government fundamentally as their budgets will be cut by approximately seven per cent year on year over the next three years. The conclusions in this chapter reflect upon the research findings in light of the current political-economic context.

In terms of Objective 1, it was discovered that ICTs in urban governance are driven by the first of the super-narratives presented in chapter 9.3.1. The inherent contradictions of competitiveness and inclusion within the super-narrative make policies unlikely to live up to their promises. The competitive aims of the knowledge economy thesis tend to favour knowledge elites, private capital and 'talent' (after Florida's thesis), being therefore conducive to a 'dual economy' (van Winden *et al*, 2007). Simultaneously, cities are seeking to agglomerate their economies in a bid to increase their competitiveness, in governance terms this has seen the rise of the city-region which in Manchester is galvanised as the Combined Authority is formally adopted in 2011.

The conclusion for Objective 1 suggests that governance practices in Manchester are vulnerable to being democratically unhinged due to the hegemony of the urban competitiveness agenda which has roots in a technologically deterministic rhetoric of a future high-tech economy. This research discovered that the inclusion of those who are democratically, socially and economically least well-endowed in the information society or the digital economy is not likely to emerge as a 'by-product' of mainstream policies currently biased in favour of a competitive knowledge economy or the dominant rhetoric around the efficiency of services. Digital development in the city, which began as radically democratising force promoting the active inclusion of citizens in the 'infosphere' of the electronically networked city has since adopted the

politics of urban entrepreneurialism in order to win support (and funding). In terms of digital development, the lessons of the ephemerality of benefits from urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989) suggest that the economic policies may not deliver their promises, certainly not for the majority of the city's residents. The 'paddle boats' of MDDA or small grassroots projects and pilots aimed at residents, small businesses and increasing the interaction between the local democratic services and citizens in the 'space of places' might prove more effective than high profile 'flagship' developments for delivering an inclusive, yet competitive electronically networked city. The conclusion for Objective 1 raises a broader question about the impact of the arms-length delivery model, as well as top-down 'policy fixes', on outcomes. The relationship and interaction with citizens within the technology agendas were weak, as the priorities were geared towards serving the 'space of flows' rather than the 'space of places'. Furthermore, tensions and inconsistencies were discovered between the different actors who promote ICTs within the city council. The tensions arise as a result of the different governance structures and modus operandi of the actors affiliated with the council's technology agendas.

The conclusion for Objective 2 points towards a status quo in local government service provision which locks the delivery of services into a 'customer-service-operative-centric' model, rather than a citizen-centric model. This 'corporate model' also hinders the development of end-to-end online applications where the middle man could be cut out. However, the low demand for e-government compared with the telephone disincentivises any change to the status quo. However, the presence of local services in districts is under threat, increasingly so due to the austerity measures, therefore online channels should be re-evaluated as an alternative. If e-government is to offer a viable alternative to local service provision, the current gulf between supply and demand needs to be bridged. Furthermore, the centralised corporate channels of access have contributed towards a confused language around 'customer-centricity'. Perhaps the most compelling finding was the profound confusion around what 'customer contact' meant, and how customer contact, complaints, and general feedback should be monitored and fed back to service design and development. Despite the customer-centric rhetoric of the transformation programme, the actual technologies of transformation rarely had any external customer interface. The corporate customer service agenda put the citizen-customer in contact with a central agent who relays the message to the service providers, therefore increasing the distance between the service provider and the citizen-customer.

In terms of the economic efficiency and democratic empowerment 'twins aims' in Objective 4, the overarching super-narrative revolves around efficiency and customer-centricity. The efficiency argument seems weak given the lack of progress made and the scale of resources expended into ICT. As the benchmarking research suggested, any efficiency savings through increased use of ICT or automation are always limited given the proportion of the budget that goes into delivering services, such as education or social services. In Manchester, the elephant in the room is that for large scale savings, redundancies would be unavoidable, which is why the 'customer card' does not play well with employees who feel vulnerable. In terms of the digital empowerment agenda, it is concluded that Manchester has not properly addressed this through digital means. There is an enormous gap in terms of rhetoric and reality in this area, which could be partly to do with the 'top-down' and centralised culture within Manchester City Council, partly because of a lack of real policy incentives from central government in this field. This is ironic given the high-profile digital development agency which has earned Manchester an international reputation as a forward-looking place for digital development, yet there appears to have been a failure to influence the Council in the way it could use digital technologies to engage with residents. It is suggested that some of this is a consequence of the tensions between the different actors observed in the conclusions for Objective 1 above.

The benchmarking lessons around Objective 3 were two-fold. Firstly, the perceptions of business leaders do not follow a linear path based on observed knowledge competitiveness indices, or information infrastructure available in places. Local authorities risk embarking on a 'wild goose chase' if they adopt ICT policies in order to influence the minds of business elites. Moreover, narrower digital (read: socio-economic) divides were conducive to better results in the information society indicators. Secondly, from Helsinki it was concluded that citizens have adopted e-government primarily because they had a high level of trust and familiarity with the online channel as well as trust in the competence of the service provider. The municipality of Helsinki also seemed to take their democratic duties more seriously in policy terms, perhaps due to their independence from the state, perhaps because of Nordic culture and values. By contrast, English local authorities have very little scope for fiscal decisions or autonomy.

Helsinki also offered a fresh environment to challenge the 'industry recipes' which have proliferated in English local e-government (Davies 1998, see chapter 4.2.3). The

most obvious challenge has to be made to CRM and the corporate contact centre model which were practically absent in Helsinki, with the exception of the small public works combined walk-in and contact centre. Whilst the officers in Helsinki felt that they were 'behind' in these customer-orientated developments emanating from the UK, the message to bring back to Helsinki is that NPM-style corporate programmes have not proved to be a panacea of efficiency, and that a different approach to managing 'customer relationship' in local government should be considered.

10.2 Wanted: a new democratic geography

In Helsinki and Manchester, both local authorities sought to form strategic alliances at the metropolitan (city-region) scale which is experiencing a renaissance thanks to the doctrine of new economic geography and agglomeration economics (see chapter 2.8), strongly recommended in the Manchester Independent Economic Review (2008). For the citizens this means a disassociation between their place of residence, their local democratic affiliation and the provision of public services which are increasingly procured and produced beyond not only the geographical boundaries of the local authority, but also outsourced to sectors outside public accountability.

The new economy thesis interprets technologies, such as superfast broadband, as a growth trigger for the wider (agglomerated) economy, increasing innovation and inward investment, and therefore benefiting 'the city' at a high level. This type of approach, however, lacks any real proven traction to benefit those communities furthest away from the knowledge economy. For the lives of these people, the quality of public services would often make a difference. It should be the local authority's 'place-shaping' duty to think carefully about the impact of its decisions for neighbourhoods like Wythenshawe or Levenshulme. In the agglomerated geography local 'space of places' can disappear from view.

The Combined Authority in Greater Manchester may have potential for making the lines of democratic accountability clearer, compared to the AGMA model with seven unelected board-led commissions, but in the same time it will increase the distance between the highest echelons of power and 'ordinary citizens'. In the electronically networked city (-region), the role of local elected members in providing local accountability and 'rootedness' in decision-making requires careful attention. The 'citizen 2.0' cannot perform the same role as elected representatives, towards a more complimentary relationship between the two is needed in the electronically networked

city.

Moreover, the poor take-up of online channels is linked to trust: trust in the technology which is still new to many who depend on public services most, but also trust in government which is a barrier across all sections of society (see 'will-nots' in chapter 3.5.5). The striking difference from the benchmarking study in Helsinki was the general level of trust in the basic competence of the local authority, as well as a more conscious effort on the authorities' part to engage citizens, and also to treat citizens as citizens (as opposed to customers). Against the backdrop of the citizen-consumer dilemma discussed in chapter 9.5.3, local government in the UK would be advised to build trust which is not addressed through the current customer satisfaction paradigm.

It is perhaps time to drop the "e" from e-government. Government *is* electronic. Those local government workers who do not use a networked device as part of discharging their core duties are becoming rare; for example pest control officers now use handheld devices. The jobs that do not involve ICT were among the first to be outsourced (cleaning, emptying bins etc). Local government has become electronically networked, but it is 'business as usual'. Making local government electronic has not been 'transformative' from the citizen-perspective. Transformation should view the relationship between the citizen and the local authority in a fundamentally different light. The NPM conception of local government modernisation has resulted in a consumer-citizen dilemma. Transformation in the customer relationship would require a radical rethink of the current 'super-narratives' of technology development in local government.

It would be wrong to conclude that technology, or electronic networks, automatically result in spatial transformation, inequality or managerial emancipation or anti-politics. Even if this is the prevalent trend, there is evidence to support the claim that electronically networked cities could be sites of democratic empowerment and social inclusion. Cities should recognise the major role that they have in commissioning, therefore steering the future development of technology. The need to use a broader value framework for technology implementation is perhaps greater than ever, at a time when the commercial gain (or fiscal savings) offered by technology seems to be the only game in town. This brings forth the importance of the social construction of the value of connectivity, and technology implementation. "*Places are spaces of social relations*", argued Massey (2002, p.459). Furthermore, a resounding message

from the Manchester case study was crystallised by a digital stakeholder into one sentence: *“Important simple point about infrastructure: It’s not what you’ve got but what you do with it”* (see chapter 6.4.2). In the electronically networked city, citizens should be at the heart of this “doing”, even when competitive advantage is considered. As Robson (1994) argued: *“A successful transition to post-industrialism involves the harnessing of local comparative advantage and the conscious creation of the city as forum”*. The risk is that the glitzy ‘high-tech fantasies’ remain disconnected from place, from the city and civilisation.

As a concluding note, the plea is made that citizens should be at the heart of the electronically networked city as a forum.

10.3 Policy recommendations

The policy recommendations made here suggest that a radical re-alignment of the current orthodoxies and ‘super-narratives’ is required in order to make provision for a more inclusive electronically networked city. These include:

- More autonomy at the local government tier so that it becomes a potent scale for democratic accountability and action. This entails less prescriptive central government targets and ‘policy fixes’, including in the field of e-government or customer services. However, much more transparency and accountability is required to change the current elite approach to ICT policy programmes locally.
- Re-introducing the ‘citizen’ to local government ‘customer relationship management’. Local government needs to embrace a more democratically rooted framework of local service delivery where the citizens’ role extends beyond a service user and a consumer.
- The democratic potential of ICTs remains over-represented in rhetoric and under-represented in real policy making and evaluation. The inclusion of wider social benefits, such as the impact on democratic engagement through providing a means for individuals and communities to connect with the ‘public sphere’, and a more value-based approach to the cost-benefit analysis performed on public sector technology projects is encouraged.

- Information management will be of crucial importance to future cities, where the information sharing – data protection balance must err on the side of caution, particularly when weighed up against ‘efficiency’ or ‘market rationality’.
- A centralised corporate approach to ‘citizen-centricity’ has not empowered citizens. Neighbourhood governance should be more integrated with ‘corporate channels’. Small pilot technology projects which are ‘issue-led’ and neighbourhood-based can have the potential benefit both service providers and citizens. Here, the interests and competencies of ‘digital development’ and ‘transformational government’ converge, and greater collaboration between the two is recommended.
- Metropolitan governance and power follow the logic of agglomeration economics and spill over outside the traditional democratic lines of accountability. The values of ICT development at the city-region scale should reflect a ‘re-democratisation’ of these new structures by connecting them to citizens more directly.

10.4 Reflections on the research

Looking back on the research process, many fertile lines of enquiry ultimately had to be excluded from this project in order to retain the focus on the contact surface between the local government and citizens. However, outside government-citizen relations, citizens were found actively using digital tools creatively and un-selfishly, to benefit their local areas in both Helsinki and Manchester. They used technologies routinely and creatively to support their usually off-line civic activities. These ‘active citizens’ felt helped as well as hindered at times by the local authority, but in most part they felt that there is potential for a mutually beneficial partnership. This kind of citizenship would offer a great opportunity for meaningful engagement if the local authority was more willing and able to embrace it.

Furthermore, alternative lines of enquiry and critique could have been applied to this research. As part of the ongoing reflexive process, it became very obvious that the ‘technology agenda’ is dominated by men disproportionately. There would be a strong case for a feminist critique of this field of work.

On the limitations of this research, it is fair to say that it has in places suffered from the same problems as the theory of the Network Society itself. Technology is omnipresent, even limited to 'local government', there was still a bewildering amount of different uses. Even inside the two chosen tracks of 'digital development' and 'technologies of transformation' there seemed to be endless permutations. The government 2.0 agenda could only be briefly mentioned in this thesis, partly because of its nascent status, partly because the theories underpinning that side of academic research are 'in flux' but not fully developed.

In hindsight, this research could have benefited from taking on the challenge of contributing to the theories around the emergent citizen 2.0 concept. However, the seeds of 'all things 2.0' were sown during this research, and given the coalition government's eagerness to engage citizens directly via initiatives such as the Spending Challenge or seeking ideas from citizens on which laws to repeal, this is a key theme for future work. There is an urgent need to address the lack of a conceptual and theoretical grounding which is needed to underpin the practical policy making in this field.

11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

6, P. (1997) *Escaping poverty: from safety nets to networks of opportunity*, London: Demos.

Aberbach, J. and Christensen, T. (2005) Citizens and Consumers - an NPM dilemma. *Public Management Review*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 225-245.

Accenture (2006) *Leadership in Customer Service: Building the Trust* [WWW] Available from: <http://www.accenture.com>. [Accessed 12 November 2006].

AGMA, (2008) *Multi Area Agreement*. [WWW] Available from: http://www.agma.gov.uk/cms_media/files/manchester_multi_area_agreement.pdf. [Accessed 2 February 2010].

AGMA (2009) *Greater Manchester Strategy*. [WWW] Available from: http://www.agma.gov.uk/cms_media/files/final_gms_august_20091.pdf [Accessed 2 February 2010]

Anderson, C. (2006) *The Long Tail*. New York: Hyperion.

Anderson, C. (2009) *Free: the future of a radical price*. London: Random House Business.

Andrain, C.F. and Smith, J.T. (2005) *Political Democracy, Trust and Social Justice*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.

Andrews, R. and Turner, D. (2006) Modelling the Impact of Community Engagement on Local Democracy. *Local Economy*, Vol. 21, No. 4, pp. 378-390.

Asgarkhani, M. (2005) The Effectiveness of e-Service in Local Government: A Case Study. *The Electronic Journal of e-Government*, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 157-166.

Association of Finnish Regional and Local Authorities (2010) *Kaupunkien ja kuntien lukumaarat* [WWW]. Available from: <http://www.kunnat.net/binary.asp?path=1;29;348;4827;4892;4869;158070&field=File Attachment&version=1> [Accessed 10 January 2010].

Bang, H. and Esmark, A. (2008) Good governance in control society - Reconfiguring the political from politics to policy. *Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association conference, Chicago 2-6 April 2008*. [WWW] Available from http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/2/6/8/4/4/p268448_index.html [Accessed 1 July 2008].

Bang, H. and Esmark, A. (2009) Good governance in network society - Reconfiguring the political from politics to policy. *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 7-37.

Baptista, M. (2005) E-Government and State Reform: Policy Dilemmas for Europe. *The Electronic Journal of E-government*, Vol. 3, Issue 4, pp. 167-174.

- Barber, B. (1984, 2003) *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a new age*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Barlow, M. (1995) Greater Manchester: conurbation complexity and local government structure. *Political Geography*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 379-400.
- BBC, the (2006b) Manchester Wireless [WWW]. Available from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/manchester/6199382.stm> [Accessed 14 September 2009].
- BBC, the (2006a) The Year of the Digital Citizen [WWW] Available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/4566712.stm> [Accessed 7 January 2007].
- BBC, the (2007) Teens turn to social websites [WWW]. Available from : <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/6235503.stm>. [Accessed 7 January 2007].
- BBC, the (2009) Troubled £12bn NHS IT system to be scaled back [WWW] Available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8397854.stm> [Accessed 6 December 2009]
- BBC, the (2010a) Anger about 'stitch-up' over Digital Economy Bill. [WWW] Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/election_2010/8608478.stm [Accessed 16 May 2010].
- BBC, the (2010b) Universities UK report warns over two-tier system [WWW]. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-11216697>. [Accessed 10 September 2010]
- BBC, the (2010c) Greater Manchester councils back city region pilot [WWW]. Available from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/manchester/8592948.stm>. [Accessed 29 March 2010].
- Benington, J. (2001) Partnerships as networked governance? Legitimation, innovation, problem solving and coordination, in Geddes, M. and Benington, J. (eds) *Local Partnerships and Social Partnerships in the European Union*. London: Routledge.
- Beynon-Davies, P. and Martin, S. (2004) Electronic Local Government and the Modernisation Agenda: Progress and Prospects for Public Service Improvement. *Local Government Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 214 - 229.
- Bijker, W.E., Hughes, T.P. and Pinch, T.J. (1987) *Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
- BIS and DCMS (2009) *Digital Britain*. [WWW] Available from <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100511084737/interactive.bis.gov.uk/digitalbritain/> [Accessed 11 May 2010].
- Boschma, R. and Martin, R. (2007) Constructing an evolutionary economic geography. *Journal of Economic Geography*, Vol. 7, pp. 537–548.
- Brannan, T., John, P. and Stoker, G. (2006) Active Citizenship and Effective Public Services and Programmes: How Can We Know What Really Works? *Urban Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 5-6, pp. 993-1008.

Brenner, N. (1998) Global cities, glocal states: Global city formation and state territorial restructuring in contemporary Europe. *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 1–37.

Brown, D. (2005) Electronic government and public administration. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 71, No. 2, pp. 241 – 254.

Brown, G. (2009) The Internet is as vital as water and gas. *The Times*, 16 June 2009. [WWW] Available from http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article6506136.ece [Accessed 16 June 2009].

Bryan, C. (1998) Manchester: Democratic Implications of an Economic Initiative? In Tsagarousianou, R., Tambini, D. and Bryan, C. (eds) *Cyberdemocracy*. London: Routledge.

Bryman, A. (2005) Integrating quantitative and qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 97-113.

Bryman, A. (2007) The Research Question in Social Research: What is its Role? *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 5-20.

BSG (2007) *Pipedreams? Prospects for next generation broadband deployment in the UK*. [WWW] Available from <http://www.broadbanduk.org/content/view/236/7/>. [Accessed 4 March 2008].

Buchstein, H. (1997) Bytes that bite: the internet and deliberative democracy. *Constellations*, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 248-263.

Cabinet Office (1999) *Modernising Government White Paper*. London: HMSO.

Cabinet Office (2001) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*. [WWW] Available from http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/images/NationalStrategyReport_tcm97-51090.pdf [Accessed 1 August 2006].

Cabinet Office (2005) *Transformational Government – enabled by technology*. Norwich: TSO.

Cabinet Office (2008) *Show us a better way*. [WWW] Available from <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100402134053/showusabetterway.com/>. [Accessed 7 June 2010].

Cabinet Office and Department for Trade and Industry (2005) *Connecting the UK: the Digital Strategy*. [WWW] Available from <http://www.strategy.gov.uk>. [Accessed 30 September 2007].

Caio, F. (2008) *The Next Phase of Broadband UK: Action now for long term competitiveness. Final Report*. [WWW] Available from: <http://www.berr.gov.uk>. [Accessed 30 September 2008].

Cairncross, F. (1997) *The death of distance: how the communications revolution will change our lives*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Cameron, D. and Clegg, N. (2010) *PM and Deputy PM Letter to public sector workers*. [WWW] Available from <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/statements-and-articles/2010/06/pm-and-deputy-pm-letter-to-public-sector-workers-52319>

Campbell, H. (1996) A social interactionist perspective on computer implementation. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 62, No. 1, pp. 99-107.

Cannon, T., Nathan, M. and Westwood, A. (2003) *Welcome to the Ideopolis*. The Work Foundation Working Paper. [WWW] Available from: http://www.ideopolis.info/downloads/ideopolis_r01.pdf [Accessed 18 November 2009].

Capgemini (2006) *Online Availability of Public Services: How Is Europe Progressing?* [WWW] Available from http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/docs/benchmarking/online_availability_2006.pdf [Accessed 2 November 2006].

Carr, N. (2004) *Does It Matter: Information Technology and the Corrosion of Competitive Advantage*. Boston: Harvard Business School.

Carr, N. (2008) *The Big Switch: Re-wiring the world from Edison to Google*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Carter, D. (1997) Digital Democracy or Information Aristocracy? Economic regeneration and the information economy. In Loader, B. (ed) *The Governance of Cyberspace*. London: Routledge, pp. 136–152.

Carter, D. (2007) Turning the Digital Divide into a Digital Dividend: Some experiences from Manchester, UK. In McMaster, T., Wastell, D., Ferneley, E. and DeGross, J. (eds) . *Organisational Dynamics of Technology-Based Innovation: Diversifying the Research Agenda*. Boston: Springer, pp. 19-29.

Carter, D. (2009) Smart Cities: Innovation and Creativity. *Eurocities conference in Stockholm, 25-28 November 2009*. Available from http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/livinglabs/docs/pdf/smart_cities_Nov09/Dave%20Carter%20-%20Smart%20CitiesNov09.pdf [Accessed 2 March 2010].

Carter, L. and Belanger, F. (2005) The utilization of e-government services: citizen trust, innovation and acceptance factors. *Information Systems Journal*, Vol. 15, pp. 5-25.

Castells, M (1996) *The Rise of the Network Society. The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, Volume I*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Castells, M. (2000) Toward a Sociology of the Network Society. *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 29, No 5, pp. 693-699.

Castells, M. (2004) Space of flows, space of places: Materials for a Theory of Urbanism in the Infomration Age. In Graham, S. (ed) *Cybercities Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 82-93.

Chadwick, A. (2006) *Internet Politics: States, Citizens, and New Communication Technologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Chadwick, A. (2009) Guest Editor's Introduction: The internet in flux. *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*, Vol. 6. No. 3-4, pp. 195 – 196.
- Chadwick, A. and Howard, P. N. (2008) 'Introduction: New Directions in Internet Politics Research' in Chadwick, A. and Howard, P. N. (eds) *The Handbook of Internet Politics*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-9.
- Chadwick, A. and May, C. (2003) Interaction between States and Citizens in the Age of the Internet: "e-government" in the United States, Britain and the European Union. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 271-300.
- Christensen, C. and Raynor, M. (2003) *The innovator's solution*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Christensen, C. (1997) *The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail*. Harvard Business School Press.
- City of Helsinki (2009) *Facts about Helsinki*. [WWW] Available from <http://www.hel.fi> [Accessed 15 January 2009].
- Clayton-Thomas and Streib (2005) The New Face of Government: Citizen-initiated Contacts in the Era of E-Government. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 83-102.
- CLG (2007) *The New Performance Framework for Local Authorities & Local Authority Partnerships: Single Set of National Indicators*. [WWW] Available from <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/505713.pdf>. [Accessed 2 November 2007].
- CLG (2008) *Local e-Government and Social Inclusion. Moving from a digital divide to social inclusion in 2003 and 2004*. Wetherby: CLG Publications.
- Clift, S. (2002) *The future of e-democracy – the 50 year plan* [WWW] Available from www.publicus.net/articles/future.html [Accessed 10 January 2007].
- Coaffee, J. and Headlam, N. (2008) 'Pragmatic localism uncovered: experiences from English urban policy reform'. *Geoforum*, Vol. 39, No. 4, pp. 1585–1599.
- Coaffee, J. and Johnston, L. (2005) The management of local government modernisation. Area decentralisation and pragmatic localism. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, Vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 164-177.
- Cochrane, A. (2007) *Understanding Urban Policy: A Critical Approach*. London: Blackwell.
- Cochrane, A. and Etherington, D. (2007) Managing local labour markets and making up new spaces of welfare. *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 39, pp. 2958 – 2974.
- Cochrane, A., Peck, J. and Tickell, A. (1996) Manchester Plays Games: Exploring the Local Politics of Globalisation. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 8, pp. 1319-1336.
- Coleman (2005a) New mediation and direct representation: reconceptualising representation in the digital age. *New Media and Society*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 177-198.

Coleman (2005b) *Direct Representation – Towards and conversational democracy*. [WWW] Available from <http://www.ippr.org.uk>. [Accessed 11 November 2007].

Coleman, S. and Gotze, J. (2001) *Bowling Together: online public engagement in policy deliberation*, London: Hansard Society.

Coleman, S. and Norris, D.F. (2005) *A new agenda for e-democracy*. Oxford Internet Institute Forum Discussion Paper No. 4, University of Oxford [WWW]. Available from: <http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/people/?id=69>. [Accessed 7 August 2009].

Comscore (2007) *Comprehensive Review of Pan-European Online Activity* [WWW]. Available from [http://www.comscore.com/Press_Events/Press_Releases/2007/06/European_Internet_Activity/\(language\)/eng-US](http://www.comscore.com/Press_Events/Press_Releases/2007/06/European_Internet_Activity/(language)/eng-US). [Accessed 3 March 2008].

Comscore (2008) *Social Networking Explodes Worldwide as Sites Increase their Focus on Cultural Relevance*. [WWW]. Available from [http://www.comscore.com/Press_Events/Press_Releases/2008/08/Social_Networking_World_Wide/\(language\)/eng-US](http://www.comscore.com/Press_Events/Press_Releases/2008/08/Social_Networking_World_Wide/(language)/eng-US). [Accessed 3 March 2008].

Corridor Partnership, the (2009) *Strategic Vision to 2020*. [WWW]. Available from http://corridormanchester.com/downloads/COR_strategic_vision.pdf. [10 January 2010].

Corridor Partnership, the (2010) *Press Release* [WWW]. Available from http://corridormanchester.com/downloads/press/geo_appointment.doc. [Accessed 2 May 2010].

Corry, D. and Parker, I. (2005) *The moderniser's tale – why modernisation in local government must continue*. London: New Local Government Network.

Corry, D and Stoker, G (2002) *New Localism: refashioning the centre-local relationship*. London: NLGN. [WWW] Available from <http://www.nlgn.org.uk>. [Accessed 11 October 2007].

Coulson, A. (2004) Local Politics, Central Power: The Future of Representative Government in England. *Local Government Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 467-480.

Cowell, R and Martin, S. (2003) The joy of joining up: modes of integrating the local government modernisation agenda. *Environment and Planning C*, Vol. 21, pp. 159-179.

Crang, M., Crosbie, T. and Graham, S. (2006) Variable Geometries of Connection: Urban Digital Divides and the Uses of Information Technology. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 13, pp. 2551-2570.

Cushman and Wakefield (2007) *European cities monitor 2007* [WWW] Available from: <http://www.europeancitiesmonitor.eu/>. [Accessed 10 September 2008].

Cushman and Wakefield (2008) *European cities monitor 2008* [WWW] Available from: <http://www.europeancitiesmonitor.eu/>. [Accessed 10 September 2008].

Cushman and Wakefield (2009) *European cities monitor 2009* [WWW] Available from: <http://www.europeancitiesmonitor.eu/>. [Accessed 3 February 2010].

Dahlberg (2001) The Internet and Democratic Discourse. Exploring the propects of online deliberative forums extending the public sphere. *Information, Communication & Society*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 615-633.

Daily Mail, the (2009a) Social websites harm children's brains: Chilling warning to parents from top neuroscientist. [WWW] Available from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1153583/Social-websites-harm-childrens-brains-Chilling-warning-parents-neuroscientist.html#ixzz19FBo9rZj>. [Accessed 24 February 2009].

Daily Mail, the (2009b) The end of ID cards? Now Government reveals they won't be compulsory. [WWW] Available from: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1196561/Compulsory-ID-cards-scrapped-Government-performs-humiliating-U-turn.html>. [Accessed 30 June 2009].

Daily Telegraph, the (2009) Climate change: this is the worst scientific scandal of our generation. [WWW] Available from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/christopherbooker/6679082/Climate-change-this-is-the-worst-scientific-scandal-of-our-generation.html> [Accessed 28 November 2009]

Daily Wireless (2007) Why San Francisco's muni wireless is years away. *Daily Wireless Newsletter*, 23 February 2007. [WWW] Available from: <http://www.dailywireless.com/news/why-san-franciscos-muni-wireless-is-years-away-022307/>. [Accessed 11 June 2010].

Danneels, E. (2004) Disruptive Technology Reconsidered: A Critique and Research Agenda. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, Vol, 21, No. 4, pp. 246–258.

Danziger, J., Dutton, W., Kling, R. and Kraemer, K. (1982) *Computers and politics: High technology in American local governments*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Davies, W. (2006) The governmentality of New Labour. *Public Policy Research*, Issue December 2006 - February 2007. [WWW] Available from <http://www.ippr.org>. [Accessed 2 November 2007].

Davies, W. (2005) Modernising with purpose: A manifesto for Digital Britain. *Institute for Public Policy Research*. [WWW] Available at <http://www.ippr.org> [Accessed 15 March 2007].

Davies, P. (1998) The value of "learning by looking" in the public services. *Benchmarking for Quality. Management & Technology*, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 260-270.

Davis, F.D. (1989) Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technologies. *MIS Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 319-340.

DCLG (2006a) *Strong and prosperous communities – the Local Government White Paper* [WWW] Available from www.communities.gov.uk/strongprosperouscommunitieswp [Accessed 10.2006].

DCLG (2006b) *A review of the DCLG Take-up campaign: Burst 1 May-July 2006* [www.communities.gov.uk] Available from: [Accessed 14 October 2006].

DCMS and BIS (2009) *Digital Britain – Final Report*. [WWW] Available at <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100511084737/http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/digitalbritain-finalreport-jun09.pdf>. [Accessed 10 July 2010]

Deas, I., Robson, B. and Bradford, M. (2000) Re-thinking the Urban Development Corporation 'experiment': the case of Central Manchester, Leeds and Bristol. *Progress in Planning*, Vol. 54, pp. 1-72.

Deas, I., and Ward, K. (2000) From the New Localism to the 'New Regionalism': The Implications of Regional Development Agencies for City Regional Relations. *Political Geography*, Vol.19, pp. 273-292.

Deas, I. and Ward, K. (2002) Metropolitan Manoeuvres: making Greater Manchester. In Peck, J. and Ward, K. (eds.) *City of Revolution – Restructuring Manchester*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 116-131.

Digital Lifestyles (2006) *Manchester Wi-fi to go city-wide* [WWW]. Available from <http://digital-lifestyles.info/2006/12/05/manchester-wifi-to-go-city-wide/>. [Accessed 11 July 2009].

Directorate-General for Competition (2008) Citynet Amsterdam: an application of the market economy investor principle in the electronic communications sector. *Competition Policy Newsletter*, No. 1/2008. [WWW]. Available from: ec.europa.eu/competition/publications/cpn/2008_1_82.pdf [Accessed 8 November 2009].

Doak, J. and Parker, G. (2005) Networked space? The challenge of meaningful participation and the new spatial planning in England. *Planning Practice and Research*, Vol. 20, Issue 1, pp. 23 – 40.

Doeleman, J. (2007) Citynet Amsterdam, The Third Way. *Presentation to FttH Council Barcelona Conference, 7 February 2007*.

Downe, J. and Martin, S. (2006) Joined Up Policy in Practice? The Coherence and Impacts of the Local Government Modernisation Agenda. *Local Government Studies*. Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 465-488.

Draca, M., Sadun, R. and Van Reenen, J. (2006) Productivity and ICT: A review of evidence. *Centre for Economic Performance Working Paper*. London: LSE.

DTLR (1998) *Modernising local government: in touch with the people*. London: HMSO.

DTLR (2001) *Modern councils, modern services – access for all*. London: HMSO.

DTLR (2001) *Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services*, Local Government White Paper. [WWW] Available from <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/143810>. [Accessed 12 December 2007]

Dunleavy, P., Margetts, H., Bastow S., and Tinkler, J. (2006) New Public Management is Dead – Long live Digital-Era Governance. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. 467-494.

Dunleavy, P. and Margetts, H. (2000) *The Advent of Digital Government: Public Bureaucracies and the state in the internet age*. Paper to the Annual Conference of the American Political Science Association, Washington, 4 September 2000.

Eade, J. and Mele, C. eds (2002) *Understanding the City – Contemporary and Future Perspectives*. Oxford: Blackwell.

EC (2002) *eEurope 2005: An information society for all*. Available from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52002DC0263:EN:NOT> [Accessed 18 September 2006].

EC (2005a) *i2010 – A European Information Society for growth and employment* [WWW] Available from http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/index_en.htm [Accessed 19 September 2006].

EC (2005b) *Information Society Benchmarking Report* [WWW] Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/docs/benchmarking [Accessed 24 October 2006].

EC (2006) *i2010 e-Government Action Plan: Accelerating e-Government in Europe for the Benefit of All*. [WWW] Available from http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=3140 Accessed 30 November 2006].

EC (2007) *i2010 Annual report 2007*. [WWW] Available from http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/key_documents/index_en.htm#Annual%20Report%202007 [Accessed 29 March 2008].

EC (2009a) *Europe's Digital Competitiveness Report: Volume 1: Benchmarking i2010: Trends and main achievements*. [WWW] Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/key_documents/index_en.htm#EDCR. [Accessed

EC (2009b) *Broadband access in the EU: situation at 1 July 2009*. [WWW]. Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/docs/interinstitutional/cocom_broadband_july09.pdf [Accessed 21 September 2009].

EC (2010a) *EUROPE 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth* [WWW] Available from: <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>. [Accessed].

EC (2010b) *A digital agenda for Europe* [WWW] Available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0245:FIN:EN:PDF> [Accessed].

EC, eGovernment Unit (2007) *Organisational change for citizen-centric eGovernment* [WWW] Available from: <http://www.ccegov.eu/>. [Accessed 27 March 2010].

Ecotec (2007) *A handbook for citizen-centric e-government*. [WWW] Available from: http://www.ccegov.eu/downloads/Handbook_Final_031207.pdf [Accessed].

Edelenbos, J. and Klijn, E-H. (2007) Trust in Complex Decision-Making Networks. A Theoretical and Empirical Exploration. *Administration and Society*, Vol. 39, No 1, pp. 25-49.

Ellis, J. (1999) Exploring the discourse of transparency and the role of secrecy. *Unpublished PhD thesis*, University of Bristol.

Emmerich, M. and Frankal, B. (2009) Building the Manchester of the Future. *Local Economy*, Vol. 24. No.1, pp. 93-97.

End Child Poverty (2009) *Why end child poverty* [WWW] Available from: <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/why-end-child-poverty/poverty-in-your-area> [Accessed 2 December 2009].

Enoll (2009) *European Networks of Living Labs* [WWW] Available from: <http://www.openlivinglabs.eu/> [Accessed 1 October 2009].

EPC (2007) *Helsingin kaupungin tietotekniikkastrategia 2007-2010*/ Helsinki's IT Strategy 2007-2010 [WWW] Available from http://www.hel.fi/wps/wcm/resources/file/eb5c33065a24854/Taske_ITstrat_07-10.pdf [Accessed 16 December 2007].

Euractiv (2004) *Lisbon Agenda* [WWW] Available from: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu/lisbon-agenda/article-117510>. [Accessed 1 November 2008].

Euractiv (2010) *Europe 2020: Green growth and jobs?* [WWW] Available from <http://www.euractiv.com/en/priorities/europe-2020-green-growth-and-jobs-linksdossier-280116> [Accessed 27 July 2010].

Eurostat (2005) *Internet usage by individuals and enterprises 2004* [WWW] Available from <http://www.egovmonitor.com/reports/rep11401.pdf>. [Accessed 12 November 2006].

Eurostat (2009) *Information Society Statistics online database* [WWW] Available from http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Information_society_statistics [Accessed 28 January 2009].

Fagan, G., Newman, P., McCusker, P. and Murray, M. (2006) *E-consultation: evaluating appropriate technologies and processes for citizens' participation in public policy*. [WWW] Available from www-econsultation.org. [Accessed 12 December 2006].

Feiock, R.C., Moon, M.J. and Park, H.J. (2008) Is the World "Flat" or "Spiky"? Rethinking the Governance Implications of Globalization for Economic Development. *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 68, Issue 1, pp. 24-34.

Fensom, S. (2007) Worldwide technology, local regeneration: the Manchester approach. In Berry, R. and McLaughlin, D. (eds) *Localism and the information society*. [WWW] Available from knowledgpolicy.org.uk [Accessed 1 March 2008].

Finger, M. and Pecoud, G. (2003) From e-Government to e-Governance? Towards a model of e-Governance. *Electronic Journal of e-Government*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 1-10.

- Finlayson, A. (1999) Third Way Theory. *The Political Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 3, pp. 271-279.
- Fischer, F. (1999) Participatory inquiry – Technological deliberation in a democratic society: the case for participatory inquiry. *Science and Public Policy*, Vol. 26, No. 5, pp. 294-302.
- Fishkin, J.S. and Luskin, R.C. (2005) Experimenting with a democratic ideal: Deliberative polling and public opinion. *Acta Politica*, Vol. 40, pp. 284-298.
- Florida, R. (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Florida, R. (2005) *Cities and the Creative Class*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Floridi, L. (2007) A Look Into the Future Impact of ICT on Our Lives. *The Information Society*, Vol. 23, pp. 59-64.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006) Five misunderstandings about case study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 219-245.
- Forum Virium (2009) Helsinki Living Lab [WWW] Available from <http://www.forumvirium.fi/hankealueet/innovaatioyhteis%C3%B6t/helsinki-living-lab>. [Accessed 15 May 2008].
- Friedman, J. (2001) World Cities Revisited: A comment. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 13, pp. 2535–2536.
- Friedman, J. (1986) The World City Hypothesis. *Development and Change*, Vol. 17, Issue 1, pp. 69-83.
- Fukuyama, F. (1995) Social capital and the global economy: A redrawn map of the world. *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, No 5, pp. 89-103.
- Game, C. (2006) Comprehensive performance assessment in English local government. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, Vol. 55, No. 6, pp. 466-479.
- Garcia, M. (2006) Citizenship practices and urban governance in European cities. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 4, pp. 745-765.
- Gauld, R. and Goldfinch, S. (2006) *Dangerous enthusiasms: E-government, Computer failure and Information System Development*. Dunedin: Otago University Press.
- Giddens, A. (1998) *The Third Way – The Renewal of Social Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (2006) *Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Gordon, I. (1999) Internationalisation and Urban Competition. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 5-6, pp. 1001-1016.
- Gordon, R. (2000) Does the “New Economy” Measure up to the Great Inventions of

- the Past? *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 49-74.
- Graham, S. (2002) Bridging Urban Divides? Urban Polarisation and Information and Communications Technologies. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1, pp 33-56.
- Graham, S. (ed.)(2004) *The Cybercities Reader*. London. Routledge.
- Graham, S. (2005) Software-sorted geographies. *Progress in Human Geography* Vol. 29, No. 5, pp. 562-580.
- Graham, S. and Dominy, G. (1991) Planning for the Information City: the UK case. *Progress in Planning*, Vol. 35, pp. 169-248.
- Graham, S. and Healey, P. (1999) Relational concepts of space and place: issues for planning theory and practice. *European Planning Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 5, pp. 623-646.
- Graham, S. and Marvin, S. (2001) *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition*. London: Routledge.
- Grant Thornton (2009) *Review of the Manchester Improvement Programme*. [WWW] Available from http://www.manchester.gov.uk/egov_downloads/Item_8._Manchester_Improvement_Plan_full_report.pdf [Accessed 20 January 2009].
- Gronbech-Jensen, C. (1998) The Scandinavian tradition of open government and the European Union: problems of compatibility? *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 5, No 1, pp. 185-99
- Guardian, The (2005) The website nobody wants. *The Guardian*, 8 December 2005 [WWW] Available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2005/dec/08/newmedia.epublic> [Accessed 4.11.2006].
- Guardian, The (2006) The tangled web of government. *The Guardian*, 2 November 2006.
- Guardian, The (2007a) The internet will revolutionise the very meaning of politics. *The Guardian*, 30 May 2007 [WWW] Available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/may/30/comment.politics> [Accessed 30 May 2007]
- Guardian, The (2007b) Minister leads push for faster broadband. *The Guardian*, 26 November 2007. [WWW] Available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2007/nov/26/telecoms.internet> [Accessed 26 November 2007].
- Guardian, The (2008) Biting the bullet. *The Guardian*, 5 November 2008 [WWW] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/nov/05/wythenshawe-manchester-council-community> [Accessed 5 November 2008].
- Guardian, The (2009) Facebook and Bebo risk 'infantilising' the human mind. *The Guardian*, 24 February 2009 [WWW] Available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/feb/24/social-networking-site-changing-childrens-brains> [accessed 24 February 2009]

Guardian, The (2010a) In just 25 years, the mobile phone has transformed the way we communicate. *The Guardian*, 1 January 2010. [WWW] Available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2010/jan/01/25-years-phones-transform-communication> [Accessed 2 July 2010].

Guardian, The (2010b) MySpace bosses battle to oust Facebook from social networking top spot. *The Guardian*, 15 March 2010 [WWW] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2010/mar/15/myspace-social-networking> [Accessed 15 March 2010].

Guardian, The (2010c) Digital economy bill rushed through wash-up in late night session. *The Guardian*, 8 April 2010 [WWW] Available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2010/apr/08/digital-economy-bill-passes-third-reading> [Accessed 8 April 2010].

Guardian, The (2010d) Facebook: Nowhere to hide. *The Guardian*, 20 August 2010. [WWW] Available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/aug/20/facebook-nowhere-to-hide-editorial?INTCMP=SRCH> [Accessed 20 August 2010].

Habermas J. (1984) *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Vol. 1. Boston: Beacon Press.

Habermas, J. (ed) (1998) *The inclusion of the other*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Habermas, J. (2006) Political Communication in Media Society: Does Democracy Still Enjoy an Epistemic Dimension? The Impact of Normative Theory on Empirical Research. *Communication Theory*, Vol. 16, pp. 411-426.

Hagemann, H.(2008) Consequences of the new information and communication technologies for growth, productivity and employment. *Competitiveness Review: an International Business Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 1-2, pp. 57-69.

Hague, B.N. and Loader, B.D. (eds) (1999) *Digital Democracy: Discourse and Decision Making in the Information Age*. London: Routledge.

Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (1983) *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. London: Tavistock.

Hart, M and Byrne, P. (2005) Using e-government to improve the quality of local authority services. *5th European Conference on E-Government*. University of Antwerp, 15-16th June, 2005.

Harvey, D. (1989) From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism. *Geographiska Annaler Series B in Human Geography*, Vol. 71, No. 1, pp. 3-17.

Harvey, D. (2005) *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Healey, P. (1999) Institutional Analysis, Communicative Planning, and Shaping Places. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, Vol. 19, pp. 111-212.

Hebbert, M. (2010) 'Manchester : making it happen. In Punter, J. (ed) *Urban Design and the British Urban Renaissance*, London: Routledge, pp. 51-67.

Hebbert, M. and Deas, I. (2000) Greater Manchester – “up and going”? *Policy & Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 79-92.

Held, D. (1996) *Models of Democracy*. Cambridge. Polity Press.

Hildreth, P. (2007) The dynamics of place-shaping: the changing rationale for urban regeneration. *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*. Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 227-239.

HM Treasury (2006a) *Lyons Inquiry into Local Government “National Prosperity, local choice and civic engagement*. Norwich. HMSO.

HM Treasury (2006b) *Varney Review: Service Transformation - A better service for citizens, a better deal for the taxpayer*. Norwich: HMSO.

HM Treasury (2007a) *Service Transformation Agreement*. Norwich: HMSO.

HM Treasury (2007b) *Meeting the aspirations of British people. 2007 Pre-budget report and Comprehensive Spending Review*. London. The Stationery Office.

HM Treasury (2009) *2009 Budget: Building Britain’s future*. [WWW] Available from http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/bud_bud09_index.htm. [Accessed 22 April 2009].

HM Treasury, BERR, CLG (2007) *Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration* [WWW] Available from: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/files/file40436.pdf>. [Accessed 22 June 2008].

Ho, A.T-K. (2002) Reinventing Local Governments and the E-government initiative. *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 62, No. 4, pp. 434-444.

Horst, M., Kuttschreuter, M., Gutteling, J.M. (2007) Perceived usefulness, personal experiences, risk perception and trust as determinants of adoption of e-government services in the Netherlands. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, Vol. 23, pp. 1838-1852.

Hospers, G.J. (2008) Governance in innovative cities and the importance of branding. *Innovation: management, policy and practice*, Vol. 10, pp. 224-234.

House of Commons Health Committee (2003) *The Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report*. [WWW] Available from: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmselect/cmhealth/570/570.pdf>. [Accessed 2 July 2010].

Howard, J. and Sweeting, D. (2007) Neighbourhoods, democracy and citizenship. In: Smith, I.; Lepine, E. and Taylor, M. (eds.) *Disadvantaged by where you live? Neighbourhood governance in contemporary urban policy*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

Huggins, R. and Izushi, H. (2008) Benchmarking the knowledge competitiveness of the globe’s high-performing regions. *Competitiveness Review: An international business journal*, Vol. 18, No. 1-2, pp. 70-86.

Huggins, R., Izushi, H., Davies, W. (2008) *World Knowledge Competitiveness Index 2008*. Wales: Robert Huggins Associates Ltd.

Huspek, M. (2007) Symposium: Habermas and Deliberative Democracy. *Communication Theory*, Vol. 17, pp. 329-332.

IDABC - Interoperable Delivery of European eGovernment Services to public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens (2006) UK: *Egovernment 2005 targets: Councils hit 97% e-enablement*. [WWW] Available from <http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/en/document/5221/345>. [Accessed 24 October 2006]

IDeA (2006) esd-toolkit newsletter. *Take 5*, issue 10. London.

IDeA – Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (2006) *esd-toolkit newsletter*, Issue 10/October 2006. [WWW] Available from <http://www.sece.gov.uk/uploads/files/esdtoolkittake5oct06.pdf>. [Accessed 15 December 2006].

IDeA (2008) Cabinet Office, CLG. Guidance No 14. [WWW] Available from: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/8553863> [Accessed 10 November 2009].

Internet World Statistics (2010) Internet usage statistics. [WWW] Available from <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm> [Accessed 2 July 2010].

Ipsos MORI (2008) Contacting the Council: A research report for Manchester City Council. Unpublished document.

Irani, Z., Love, P., Elliman, T., Jones, S. and Themistocleous, M. (2005) Evaluating e-government: learning from the experiences of two UK local authorities. *Information Systems Journal*. Vol. 15, pp. 61-82.

Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, ITIF (2007) Assessing Broadband in America: OECD and ITIF Rankins. [WWW] Available from <http://www.itif.org> [Accessed 26 November 2007]

Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, ITIF (2008) International broadband rankings. [WWW] Available from: <http://www.itif.org>. [Accessed 13 December 2008].

Jaeger, P. (2003) The endless wire: E-government as a global phenomenon. *Government Information Quarterly*, Vol. 20, pp. 323-331

Jaeger, P. (2005) Deliberative Democracy and the conceptual foundations of electronic government. *Government Information Quarterly*, Vol. 22, pp. 702-719.

Jansen, A. (2006) What role Has Scandinavian IS Tradition in eGovernment Implementations. In Wimmer, M.A. et al (eds) *EGOV 2006*, pp. 47-57. Springer-Verlag, Berlin.

Jessop, B. (1997) Capitalism and its Future: Remarks on Regulation, Government, and Governance, *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 561-800.

Jorgensen, D. and Klay, E. (2007) Technology-Driven Change and Public Administration: Establishing Essential Normative Principles, *International Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 30, No. 3, pp. 289 – 305.

- Katz, J.E. and Rice, R.E. (2002) *Social consequences of internet use: access, involvement and interaction*. Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Kavanaugh, A., Isenhour, P., Cooper, M., Carroll, M., Rosson, M. and Schmitz, J. (2005) Information Technology in Support of Public Deliberation. In Besselaar et al (eds) *Communities and Technologies*, Springer, pp. 19-40.
- Kearns, I. (2004) *Public Value and e-Government*. [WWW] Available from <http://www.ippr.org/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=478> [Accessed 12 November 2006].
- Kellner, P. (2007). The Goldilocks dilemma. *E-government Bulletin*, 5 February 2007, Issue 231. [WWW] Available from <http://www.headstar.com/site/index.php> [Accessed 5 February 2007].
- Kellner, P. (2009) Down with people power. *The Prospect Magazine*, 4 July 2009, Issue 160 [WWW] Available from <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/issue/160/> [Accessed 10 July 2009].
- Kearns, A. (1995) Active Citizenship and Local Governance: Political and Geographical Dimensions. *Political Geography*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp.155-175.
- King, S. & Cotterill, S. (2007) Transformational Government? The role of information technology in delivering citizen-centric local public services. *Local Government Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3 pp. 333-354.
- Kingston, R. (2007) Public participation in local policy decision-making: the role of web-based mapping. *The Cartographic Journal*, 44(2), 138-144.
- Kingston, R., Carver, S., Evans, A. and Turton, I. (2000) Web-Based Public Participation Geographical Information Systems: An Aid To Local Environmental Decision-Making. *Computers, Environment and Urban Systems*. 24(2) 109-125.
- Kingston, R., Babicki, D. and Ravetz, J. (2005) Urban Regeneration in the Intelligent City. *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Computers in Urban Planning and Urban Management*, CASA, UCL London 29 June – 1 July 2005.
- Kling, R. and Kraemer, K.L. (1982) Chapter in Danziger et al (eds) *Computers and politics: High technology in American local governments*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Knowledge Capital (2009) Manchester City-Region Innovation Prospectus [WWW] Available from <http://www.manchesterknowledge.com> [Accessed 2 February 2010].
- Kok, W. (2007) Speech at the Microsoft Government Leaders Forum in Edinburgh, 30 January 2007. [WWW] Available from <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/nmCentre/news/mglf/mglf0130-02.htm> [Accessed 6 December 2007]
- Kokkonen, J. and Helminen, L. (2006) Kondeka – Raportti Urban II ohjelman rahoittamasta asukastoiminnasta Kontulassa. *Unpublished evaluation report of the Urban II funded activities in Kontula*. Helsinki City Council.

Kolsaker, A. and Lee-Kelley, L. (2007) Erratum: G2C e-government: Modernisation or transformation? *An International Journal of Electronic Government*, Vol. 4, No. 1 pp. 68-57.

Komito, L. (2005) E-Participation and Governance: Widening the net. *The Electronic Journal of e-Government*, Vol. 3. Issue 1, pp. 39-48.

Kontula.com (2008) *Online discussion forum* [WWW] Available from http://www.kontula.com/laatulahio_vai_slummi.html [Accessed 15 May 2008]

Koutroumpis, P. (2009) The economic impact of broadband growth: A simultaneous approach. *Telecommunications Policy*, Vol. 33, pp. 471-485.

Kraemer, K.L. and Dutton, W.H. (1982) Chapter in Danziger *et al* (eds) *Computers and politics: High technology in American local governments*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Kuhn, T. (1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*. 2nd Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kuntaliitto (2010) *Number of Finnish municipalities 1920-2010* [WWW] Available from http://www.kunnat.net/k_perussivu.asp?path=1;29;374;36984;31661;165983 [Accessed 1 July 2010]

Lam, W. (2005) Barriers to e-government integration. *The Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, Vol. 18, No. 5, pp. 511-530.

Leadbeater (1999) *Living on thin air: The New Economy*. London: Penguin.

Leadbeater (2008) *WE-think: Mass innovation, not mass production*. London: Profile Books.

Lever, W. F. (1999) Competitive Cities in Europe. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 36, No 5-6, pp. 1029-1044.

Lodge, G. and Kalitowski, S. (2007) Innovations in Government: International perspectives on civil service reform. *Institute for Public Policy Research*. [WWW] Available from: <http://www.ippr.org.uk>. [Accessed 6 December 2007].

Longbottom, D. (2000) Benchmarking in the UK: an empirical study of practitioners and academics. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 98-117.

Longley, P. and Singleton, A. (2009) Linking Social Deprivation and Digital Exclusion in England. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 7, pp. 1275-1298.

Longley, P., Webber, R., Li, C. (2008) The UK geography of the e-society: a national classification. *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 362-382.

LSE (2010) Freezing public sector IT – what is the government trying to achieve? *London School of Economics* [WWW] Available from <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/2010/05/25/freezing-public-sector-it-%E2%80%93-what-is-the-government-aiming-to-achieve/> [Accessed 25 May 2010].

Lucas, B (2003) *Information Management for Community Planning and Regeneration*.

Unpublished PhD thesis. The University of Manchester.

Mace, A., Hall, P. and Gallent, N. (2007) New East Manchester: Urban Renaissance or Urban Opportunism? *European Planning Studies*, Vol. 15, No.1, pp. 51-65.

Mahrer, H. and Krimmer, R. (2005) Towards the enhancement of e-democracy: identifying the notion of the 'middleman paradox'. *Journal of Information Systems*, Vol. 15, pp. 27-42.

Manchester Evening News (MEN) (2007) The two sides of Manchester. *Manchester Evening News*, 8 November 2007.

Manchester Evening News (MEN) (2009) Leader of a brave new digital world. *Manchester Evening News*, 3 March 2009.

Marcuse, P. (2002) Depoliticizing Globalization: From Neo-Marxism to the Network Society of Manuel Castells. In Eade, J. and Mele, C. (eds) *Understanding the City – Contemporary and Future Perspectives*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 131-158.

Margetts, H. (2006) E-Government in Britain – A Decade on. *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 2, pp. 250 -265.

Martin, S. (2002) The modernisation of UK local government. *Public Management Review*, Vol. 4, Issue 3, pp. 291-307.

Martins, L. and Rodrgeuz-Alvarez, J. (2007) Towards glocal leadership: taking up the challenge of new local governance in Europe. *Environment and Planning C*, Vol. 25, pp. 391-409.

Massey, D. (2002) Living in Wythenshawe, in Borden, I. et al (eds) *The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space*. MIT Press.

Massey, D., Quintas, P. and Wield, D. (1992) *High-tech fantasies: Science parks in society, science and space*. London: Routledge.

MCC (2005a) The Manchester Improvement Programme Introductory Information Pack. *Unpublished MCC intranet document*, [WWW] Available from: [Accessed September 2006].

MCC (2006a) eGovernment – Achievement of Priority Outcomes and Wider Corporate Inclusion. Report to the Finance and General Purposes Overview and Scrutiny Committee. [WWW] Available from: [Accessed].

MCC (2006b) Environment on Call. Report to the Physical Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 10 January 2006.

MCC (2007a) *Corporate Plan 2007-2011*. [WWW] Available from http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200009/council_performance/71/corporate_plan/1 [Accessed 12 February 2007].

MCC (2007b) Global Revenue Monitoring 2007/08, *Report to the Executive 25 July 2007*. [WWW] Available from: [Accessed].

MCC (2007c) *Proposals for the onward implementation of SAP*. Unpublished report to the MIP Board on the outcome of the SAP review.

MCC (2008a) Manchester Improvement Programme. Report to the Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee 7 February 2008. [WWW] Available at <http://www.manchester.ac.uk> [Accessed 5 March 2008].

MCC (2008b) *Information Strategy*. Unpublished report to the Senior Management Team, July 2008.

MCC (2009a) *Customer Services Strategy*. Unpublished report to the Senior Management Team, February 2009.

MCC (2009b) *ICT Strategy*. Unpublished report to the Senior Management Team, January 2009.

MCC (2009c) Manchester Improvement Programme. *Report to the Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee 5 February 2009*. [WWW] Available from: <http://www.manchester.gov.uk> [Accessed 11 March 2009].

MCC (2009d) State of the Wards report 2008/2009 [WWW] Available at <http://www.manchesterpartnership.org.uk> [Accessed 23 July 2009].

MCC (2010) AGMA Improvement and Efficiency Commission. *Report to the Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee*. [WWW] Available from: <http://www.manchester.gov.uk> [Accessed 21 April 2010].

MDDA (2006) *A Digital Strategy for the Manchester City-region*. [WWW] Available from <http://www.manchesterdda.com/digital-strategy/> [Accessed 12 September 2007].

Miliband, D. (2006) 'Local government as place maker' Speech at the *LGA Delivering Sustainable Communities Conference*, Birmingham 14 February 2006. [WWW] Available from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1163638> [Accessed 23 March 2007].

Ministry of Finance (2009) Amending the act governing the Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council (YTV). *Ministry of Finance publications 17/2009: Helsinki*. [WWW] Available from: http://www.vm.fi/vm/en/04_publications_and_documents/01_publications/03_municipal/20090407Amendi/name.jsp. [Accessed 22 December 2009].

Ministry of Justice (2008) *Winners of the Building Democracy Innovation Fund* [WWW] Available from <http://www.justice.gov.uk/news/announcement061108a.htm> [Accessed 6 November 2008]

Ministry of Transport and Communications, Finland (2009) Access to a minimum of 1 Mbit Internet connection available to everyone in Finland by July 2010. *Press release* [WWW] Available from: <http://www.lvm.fi/web/en/pressreleases/view/920100>. [15 December 2009].

Molotoch, H. (1976) The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place. *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 82, No. 2, pp. 309-332.

Moon, M. J. (2002) The Evolution of E-Government among Municipalities: Rhetoric or Reality? *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 62, No. 4, pp. 424-433.

Morphet, J. (2004) The New Localism. *Town and Country Planning*, Vol. 73, No. 10, pp. 291-293.

Morphet, J. (2008) *Modern Local Government*. London: Sage.

Mosco, V. (2004) Webs of Myth and Power: Connectivity and the New Computer Technopolis, in Graham, S. (ed) *The Cybercities Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 199-204.

Mossberger, K., Tolbert, C., and McNeal, R. (2008) *Digital Citizenship. The Internet, Society and Participation*. London: The MIT Press.

Mouawad, D. C. (2009) A governance blueprint for the “federalist” Manchester City-Region. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*. Vol. 22, No. 3. pp. 203-209.

Murdoch, J., S. Abram and Marsden, T. (2000). Technical Expertise and Public Participation in Planning for Housing: 'Playing the Numbers Game, in Stoker, G. (ed) *Power and Participation: The new politics of British local governance*. London: Macmillan. pp. 198-214.

National Consumer Research Council NCRC (2007) Palveluja kotiin verkosta – loppuraportti.[WWW] Available from http://www.kuluttajatutkimuskeskus.fi/files/5068/2007_07_julkaisu_palkove.indd.pdf [Accessed 15 May 2008].

Needham, C. (2004) *Citizens as consumers: the government-citizen relationship in England, 1997-2003. Unpublished doctoral dissertation*, The University of Oxford.

Newton, K. (2001) Trust, Social Capital, Civil Society, and Democracy. *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 201–214

Norris, P. (2001) *The Digital Divide: civic engagement, information poverty and the Internet worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nyholm, I. and Haveri, A. (2009) Between Government and Governance – Local Solutions for Reconciling Representative Government and Network Governance. *Local Government Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 109-124.

O'Connor, J. and Gu, X. (2010) Developing a Creative Cluster in a Postindustrial City: CIDS and Manchester. *The Information Society: An International Journal*. Vol. 26, Issue 2, pp. 124–136.

ODPM (2000) *Our Towns and Cities: The Future - Delivering an Urban Renaissance* [WWW] Available from <http://www.communities.gov.uk>. [Accessed 1 September 2006].

ODPM (2002) *National Strategy for Local E-government*. London: HMSO.

OECD (2001a) *The New Economy: Beyond the hype: The OECD growth project*. Paris: OECD Publications.

OECD (2001b) *The Hidden Threat to E-Government: Avoiding large government IT failures*. [WWW] Available from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/19/12/1901677.pdf>. [Accessed 21 October 2006]

OECD (2003) Promise and problems of e-democracy: Challenges of online citizen engagement. [WWW] Available from www.gov2u.org/publications/4_oecd-eDemocracy2003.pdf. [Accessed 21 October 2006].

OECD (2007) Participative Web and User-created content – Web 2.0, wikis and social networking. [WWW] Available from <http://www.oecd.org>. [Accessed 5 January 2008].

Ofcom (2007) *The Communications Market 2007*. [WWW] Available from <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/cm/nations/> [Accessed 11 January 2009].

Ofcom (2008) *Social Networking – a Quantitative and Qualitative research report into attitudes, behaviours and use*. [WWW] Available from: http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/socialnetworking/report.pdf. [Accessed 11 January 2009].

Office for National Statistics (2000) *Internet Access Quarter 3 2000*. [WWW] Available from: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/internet1200.pdf>. [Accessed 1 July 2008].

O'Reilly, T., (2006) Web 2.0 Compact Definition: Trying Again. *Read*. [WWW] Available from <http://radar.oreilly.com/archives/2006/12/web-20-compact.html>. [Accessed 2 March 2007].

Pan, S.L. and Lee, J. N. (2003) Using e-CRM for a unified view of the customer. *Communications of the ACM*, Vol. 46, No. 4, pp.95–99.

Park, S-C. and Lee, S-K. (2005) The national and regional innovation systems in Finland: from the path dependency to the path creation approach. *Artificial Intelligence & Society*, Vol. 19, pp. 180-195.

Parkinson, M. (2005) Local Strategies in a global economy: Lessons from competitive cities. In OECD, *Local Governance and the Drivers of Growth*, pp. 133-174.

Phelps, N. (2009) From branch plant economies to knowledge economies? Manufacturing industry, government policy and economic development in Britain's old industrial regions. *Environment and Planning C*, Vol. 27, pp. 574-592.

Phillips, S. and Orsini, M. (2002) Mapping the Links: Citizen Involvement in Policy Processes. *Canadian Policy Research Networks*. Available from <http://www.cprn.org>. [Accessed 2 February 2007].

PIU (2000) e-gov: Electronic Government Services for the 21st century. [WWW] Available from <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/su/delivery/e-gov.pdf> [Accessed 4 November 2006].

PMSU and DTI (2005) *Connecting the UK: the Digital Strategy*. London. Strategy Unit.

Powell, M. (2000) New Labour and the third way in the British welfare state: a new and distinctive approach? *Critical Social Policy*, Vol. 20, No, 1, pp. 69-60.

Preston, P. and Cawley, A. (2008) Broadband development in the European Union to 2012 – a virtuous circle scenario. *Futures*, Vol. 40, pp. 812-821.

Puchta, C. and Potter, J. (2004) *Focus Group Practice*. London: Sage.

Quilley, S. (2000) Manchester First: From Municipal Socialism to the Entrepreneurial City. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 601-615.

Raco, M., Parker, G. and Doak, J. (2006) Reshaping spaces of local governance? Community strategies and the modernization of local government in England. *Environment and Planning C*, Vol. 24, pp. 475-496.

Reddick, C.G. (2005) Citizen interaction with e-government: From the streets to servers? *Government Information Quarterly*, Vol. 22, pp. 38-57.

Reddick, C. G. (2009) The adoption of centralized customer service systems: As survey of local governments. *Government Information Quarterly*, Vol. 26, pp. 219-226.

Repo, P., Pantzar, M., Timonen, P. and Hyvönen, K. (2006). Blueprint for Consumer 2.0. In Walden, P.; Fullér, R. and Carlsson, J. (eds). *Expanding the Limits of the Possible, Place of publication*. Åbo: IAMSR, pp. 94-100.

Rienstra, B. and Hook, D. (2006) Weakening Habermas: The undoing of communicative rationality. *Politikon*, Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. 313-339.

Ritchie, J. and Spencer, L. (1994) Qualitative Data Analysis for Applied Policy Research. In Bryman, A. and Burgess, R.G. (eds) *Analyzing qualitative data*, London. Routledge, pp. 173-193.

Robson, B. (2002) Mancunian ways: the politics of regeneration. In Peck, J. and Ward, K. (eds.) *City of Revolution – Restructuring Manchester*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 34-49.

Robson, B. (1994) No city, no civilisation. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 131-141.

Rogers, B. (2006) Multiplying the 'magic 1%'. *Institute for Public Policy Research*. [WWW] Available from <http://www.ippr.org/articles/archive.asp?id=2348&fID=172>. [Accessed 19 April 2007].

Rose, N. (2000) Community, Citizenship and the Third Way. *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 43, No. 9, pp. 1395-1411.

Rutherford, J. (2005) Networks in Cities, Cities in Networks: Territory and Globalisation Intertwined in Telecommunications Infrastructure Development in Europe. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 42, No 13, pp. 2389-2406.

Rutherford, T. (2006) Local representations in crisis: governance, citizenship regimes, and UK TECs and Ontario local boards. *Environment and Planning D*, Vol. 24, pp. 409-426.

- Ryder, G. (2007) Debunking the optimists. An evaluation of conventional wisdom about the digital divide and e-government in the British Isles. *Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 112-130.
- Salford City Council (2003) National Customer Relationship Management Programme: *Joint report of head of Salford @dvance and customer services to Lead Members of Corporate Services*, 4 August 2003. [WWW] Available from <http://www.salford.gov.uk> [Accessed 2 July 2010].
- Salminen, A. (2008) Evaluating the New Governance of the Welfare State in Finland. *International Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 31, pp.1242-1258.
- Sapsford, R. and Jupp, V. (eds.) (1996) *Data Collection and Analysis*. Sage: London.
- Sassen, S. (1994) *Cities in a world economy*. London: Pine Forge.
- Sims, D. (2007) CRM Adoption 'Biggest Problem' in 83 Percent of Cases. *Technology Marketing Corporation Net*. [WWW] Available at <http://blog.tmcnet.com/telecom-crm/2007/11/30/crm-adoption-biggest-problem-in-83-percent-of-cases-wigan-gets-crm-tre.asp> [Accessed 2 July 2008].
- Slack, R. and Williams, R. (2000) The dialectics of place and space. *New Media and Society*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 313 – 334.
- Smith, M.P. (2002) Power in Place: Retheorizing the Local and the Global. In Eade, J. and Mele, C. (eds) *Understanding the City – Contemporary and Future Perspectives*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp 109-130.
- Smith, I., Lepine, E. And Taylor, M. (2007) *Disadvantaged by where you live: Neighbourhood governance in contemporary urban policy*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Southern A. (2001) 'What Matters Is What Works? - The Management of Regeneration'. *Local Economy*, Vol. 16, No 4, pp. 264–271.
- Southern, A. (2002) Can Information and communication Technologies Support Regeneration? *Regional Studies: The Journal of Regional Studies Association*, Vol. 36, No. 6, pp. 697–702.
- Southern, A. and Townsend, A. (2005) Information and Communication Technologies and their role in Urban Regeneration. *Local Economy*, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 266-279.
- Stalder, F. (2006) *Manuel Castells – The theory of the Network Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Streib, G. and Navarro, I. (2006) Citizen Demand for Interactive E-Government. *American Review of Public Administration*, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 288-300.
- Suzuki, L., Ahluwalia, M., Arora, A. and Mattis, G. (2007) The Pond You Fish in Determines the Fish You Catch. *The Counselling Psychologist*, Vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 295-327.
- Swyngedow, E. (2005) Governance innovation and the citizen: The Janus face of governance-beyond-the-state. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 11, pp. 1991-2006.

Tapscott, D. and Williams, A. (2006) *Wikinomics: How mass collaboration changes everything*. London: Atlantic Books.

Telegraph, The (2009) Climate change: This is the worst scientific scandal of our generation. *The Telegraph*, 28 November 2009. [WWW] Available from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk> [Accessed 28 November 2009].

Tewdwr-Jones, M., Morphet, J. and Allmendinger, P. (2006) The contested strategies of local governance: community strategies, development plans and local government modernisation. *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 38, pp. 533-551.

Thomas, J. and Streib, G. (2003) The New Face of Government: Citizen-Initiated Contact in the Era of E-Government. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 83-102.

Thomas, J. and Streib, G. (2005) E-democracy, e-commerce and e-research. *Administration & Society*, Vol. 37, No. 3, pp. 259-280.

Thrift, N. (2002) A hyperactive world. In Johnston, R; Taylor, P. and Watts. M. (eds.) *Geographies of global change: Remapping the world. 2nd edition*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 29-42.

Tickell, A. and Peck, J. (1996) The return of the Manchester Men: men's words and men's deeds in the remaking of the local state. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 21, No. 4, pp. 595-616.

Times, the (2009a) Climate change data dumped. *The Times*, 29 November 2009 [WWW] Available from <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/environment/article6936328.ece> [Accessed 29 November 2009].

Times, the (2009b) Bankers' bonuses 'will soar to £6bn' after government bailouts and rising profits. *The Times*, 29 October 2009. [WWW] Available from http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/industry_sectors/banking_and_finance/article6883056.ece [Accessed 29 October 2009].

Times, the (2010) Barnet Council's 'no-frills' approach to services falls foul of the law. *The Times*, 5 January 2010. [WWW] Available from <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article6975974.ece> [Accessed 5 January 2010].

Titscher, S., Meyer, M., Wodak, R.; and Vetter, E. (2000) *Methods of text and discourse analysis*. London: Sage.

Tolbert, C. and Mossberger, K. (2006). The Effects of E-Government of Trust and Confidence in Government. *Public Administration Review*, May-June, pp. 354-369.

Torres, L., Pina, V. and Acerete, B. (2006) E-Governance developments in European Union cities: reshaping governments' relationship with citizens. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 277-302.

Tsagarousianou, R., Tambini, D. and Bryan, C. (1998) *Cyberdemocracy: Technology, cities and civic networks*. London: Routledge.

- United Nations, The (2010) *State of the World's Cities 2010/2011 - Cities for All: Bridging the Urban Divide*. [WWW] Available from <http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=8051&catid=7&typeid=46&subMenuId=0> [Accessed 21 September 2010].
- Urban Facts (2007) *The Economic Map of Urban Europe: A comparative study of 45 European metropolises*. [WWW] Available from http://www.hel2.fi/tietokeskus/julkaisut/pdf/07_12_04_tilast_42_suokas.pdf [Accessed 15 May 2008].
- US Department of Education (2010) Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies. [WWW] Available from <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf> [Accessed 29 September 2010].
- van der Meer, A. and van Winden, W. (2002) E-governance in cities: A Comparison of Urban Information and Communication Technology Policies. *Policy Debates*, Vol. 37, No. 4, pp. 407-419.
- van Winden, W. and Woets, P. (2004) Urban broadband internet policies in Europe: a critical review. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 10, pp. 2043-2059.
- van Winden, W., van Den Berg, L. and Pol, P. (2007) European Cities in the Knowledge Economy: Towards a Typology. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 3, pp. 525-549.
- Varney, Sir David (2006) Speech at the Transforming Local Services conference. *The Northwest E-government Group*, Manchester, 7 November 2006.
- Viitanen, J. and Kingston, R. (2009) The Role of Public Participation GIS in Local Service Delivery. In Reddick, C. (ed) *Strategies for Local E-Government Adoption and Implementation: Comparative Studies*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global, pp. 611-630.
- Von Haldenwang, C. (2004) Electronic Government (e-government) and development. *The European Journal of Development Research*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 417-432.
- Ward, K. (2003) Entrepreneurial Urbanism, State restructuring and civilizing "New" East Manchester. *Area*, Vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 116-127.
- Welch, E.; Hinnant, C; and Moon, J. (2005) Linking Citizen Satisfaction with E-Government and Trust in Government. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 371-391.
- West, D. (2004) E-Government and the Transformation of Service Delivery and Citizen Attitudes. *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 64, No. 1, pp.15-27.
- Wilhelm, A. (2000) *Democracy in the digital age: Challenges to political life in cyberspace*. London: Routledge.
- Williams, L., Lee, N., Jones, A. and Coats, D. (2006) *Creating an Ideopolis: Case Study of Manchester*. London: The Work Foundation.

- Williams, M.D. (2008). E-government adoption in Europe at regional level. *Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 47–59.
- Wong, C. (1998) Determining Factors for Local Economic Development: The Perception of Practitioners in the North West and Eastern Regions of the UK. *Regional Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 8, pp. 707–720.
- WEF (2008) *The Global Information Technology Report 2008-2009*. [WWW] Available from: <http://www.networkedreadiness.com/gitr/main/>. [Accessed 2 November 2009].
- WEF (2009) *The Global Competitiveness Report 2009-2010*. [WWW] Available from: <http://www.weforum.org/documents/GCR09/index.html>. [Accessed 2 November 2009].
- Yasin, M.M. (2002) The theory and practice of benchmarking: then and now. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 217-243.
- Yin, R. (2003) *Applications of case study research*. London: Sage.
- Yin. R. (1994) *Case study research: design and methods*. London: Sage.
- Zimmerman, P. and Finger. M. (2005) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Local Power Relationships: An Impact Assessment. *The Electronic Journal of e-Government*, Vol. 3, Issue 4, pp. 231-240.

APPENDIX 1

Selecting and cleansing data from the National Take-up Study by esd-toolkit

The primary analysis of the take-up data by esd-toolkit focuses on trends across the monitoring period (September 2006 - January 2007). For the purposes of this secondary analysis, rather than examining trends inside the monitoring period, general pointers were sought to compare the level of demand overall for different channels (web, telephone, face-to-face). Therefore, the data was analysed on the basis of accumulative totals over the monitoring period.

Firstly, for the purpose of the secondary analysis the data was transported into SPSS from the original Excel worksheets and re-coded. Descriptive analysis by way of crosstabulation was undertaken to establish how robust the data is in terms of the submissions by the participating LAs, as this had been identified as a weakness in the final report by esd-toolkit.

On the basis of the crosstabulation (Table 1 below) it was obvious that the participants had reported on the different services and channels very selectively, and that this would prevent any meaningful analysis of the overall volumes of the raw data without filtering the information further.

Table 1 illustrates the participating LAs (1-30) in terms of their reporting over the three channels. Four LAs reported on one service only, seven LAs only on one channel. In order to compare volumes across the channels meaningfully, those services with the most consistent reporting were identified. In other words only those services with sufficient reporting over each of the three channels were selected for inter-channel comparisons.

Table 1: LA * channel crosstabulation

		Channel			Total
		web	tel	f2f	
LA	1	6	6	5	17
	2	10	0	0	10
	3	8	4	4	16
	4	11	4	0	15
	5	14	15	16	45
	6	3	2	1	6
	7	28	15	12	55
	8	4	0	0	4
	9	6	2	1	9
	10	8	8	8	24
	11	4	2	0	6
	13	0	3	5	8
	14	6	7	1	14
	15	5	12	11	28

16	9	2	1	12
17	1	1	1	3
18	8	7	7	22
19	6	9	8	23
20	25	0	0	25
21	18	1	0	19
22	1	0	0	1
23	6	2	3	11
24	1	1	1	3
25	3	1	1	5
26	1	4	2	7
27	0	1	0	1
28	1	0	0	1
29	1	0	0	1
30	1	1	0	2
Total	195	110	88	393

Table 2 (below) illustrates the total basket of services that was being monitored in the study against the number of submissions for each channel. The cell counts indicate the number of submissions (participating LAs) in that service/channel combination. This table was used to select those services with the most consistent reporting for further analysis (selected services highlighted). The selection criteria were based on the count in each cell (web, telephone, face to face) which has to be at least five, with the difference between the biggest and smallest count no greater than five across the row. This approach minimised bias when comparing total accumulative volumes resulting from an uneven number of submissions.

Table 2: Services * channel crosstabulation.

		channel			Total
		web	tel	f2f	
service	Childcare	4	2	0	6
	school holidays	4	1	0	5
	Council tax	17	12	10	39
	Vacancies	23	8	5	36
	Complaints	2	2	2	6
	Abandoned vehicles	12	8	7	27
	Noise pollution	17	14	12	43
	Libraries	15	9	8	32
	Parking fines	17	10	8	35
	Refuse/household waste collection	10	6	5	21
	Refuse - domestic bins	0	1	1	2
	Refuse - bulky waste	9	9	7	25
	Refuse - garden waste	5	1	0	6
	Pavement maintenance	5	1	1	7
	Roads maintenance	8	3	1	12

Street lighting	7	3	2	12
Graffiti	6	5	3	14
Flytipping	11	9	7	27
Planning	16	5	9	30
School appeals	7	1	0	8
Total	195	110	88	393

The take-up study also differentiated between five types of interaction: “information provision”, “application for service”, “collecting revenue”, “making payments” and “venue & course bookings”. Table 3 below maps the volumes of the types of interaction, the count in each cell indicating the total number of services from all participating LAs in that interaction/channel combination. It shows that “applications for service” were the most monitored genre of interaction, followed by “information provision”. The table suggests that comparison might be fruitful for the selected services between the first two types of interaction (“information provision” and “applications for service” with considerably higher numbers of submissions).

Table 3: Interaction * channel crosstabulation

		channel			Total
		web	tel	f2f	
interaction	Providing information	78	28	22	128
	Applications for service	94	64	51	209
	Collecting revenue	10	7	6	23
	Making payments	11	9	7	27
	Booking venues & courses	2	2	2	6
Total		195	110	88	393

Further analysis in the ensuing sections was carried out solely on the basis of the five services identified for which the level of reporting was judged adequate.

Tables 4 - 9 show the accumulative totals of customer contacts over the monitoring period for the selected five services and the number of contributing LAs.

Table 4: Abandoned vehicles/ all customer contacts

Channel	Customer contacts: Abandoned vehicles	Number of contributing LAs
Web	3355	12
Telephone	3062	8
Face to face	90	7

Table 5: Noise pollution/ all customer contacts

Channel	Customer contacts: Noise pollution	Number of contributing LAs
Web	6312	17
Telephone	5870	14
Face to face	52	12

Table 3: Refuse -household waste collection/ all customer contacts

Channel	Customer contacts: Refuse - household waste collection	Number of contributing LAs
Web	6169	10
Telephone	14737	6
Face to face	75	5

Table 4: Refuse – bulky waste/ all customer contacts

Channel	Customer contacts: Refuse - bulky waste	Number of contributing LAs
Web	4621	9
Telephone	39998	9
Face to face	108	7

Table 5: Flytipping/ all customer contacts

Channel	Customer contacts: Flytipping	Number of contributing LAs
Web	1368	11
Telephone	5148	9
Face to face	378	7

APPENDIX 2

CONFIDENCE INTERVAL TABLES FOR LISTENING TO YOUR VIEWS BEST VALUE SURVEY

Table 1: 95% confidence intervals for satisfaction with the final outcome of the contact recoded (Figure 4b)

	satisfied		dissatisfied	
	Min%	Max%	Min%	Max%
in person	47.13	56.66	23.91	32.49
telephone	58.54	63.16	22.58	26.66
email	41.65	53.35	27.01	37.99
website	57.07	71.77	15.17	27.78
letter	33.04	43.78	27.52	37.88

Table 2: 95% confidence intervals for “Is the Council trustworthy” recoded (Figure 8b)

	“agree”		“disagree”		“don’t know”	
	Min%	Max%	Min%	Max%	Min%	Max%
in person	44.88	54.41	25.20	33.90	13.00	20.09
telephone	47.22	51.96	25.62	29.87	16.67	20.36
email	36.85	48.46	23.37	33.98	20.34	30.56
website	47.90	63.21	11.99	23.80	18.05	31.33
letter	39.09	50.08	29.76	40.31	13.31	21.72

Table 3: 95% confidence intervals for “How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the opportunities for participation in local decision making?” (Figure 10)

	“satisfied”		“neither sat./ dissat.”		“dissatisfied”		“don’t know”	
	Min%	Max%	Min%	Max%	Min%	Max%	Min%	Max%
in person	26.27	35.05	23.12	31.60	18.66	26.63	14.27	21.58
telephone	25.38	29.615	30.93	35.39	19.59	23.49	15.04	18.58
email	10.89	19.32	32.77	44.21	24.82	35.61	10.58	18.92
website	5.28	14.47	34.98	50.21	24.33	38.63	9.87	20.99
letter	20.82	30.45	23.50	33.46	22.91	32.79	12.94	21.24

Table 4: 95% confidence intervals for “Channel choice by employment status” (Figure 11b)

	Working/studying		Not at work	
	Min%	Max%	Min%	Max%
in person	10.33	13.27	18.79	24.31
telephone	56.86	61.34	57.97	64.51
email	11.23	14.27	2.67	5.29
website	6.14	8.50	1.42	3.50
letter	7.63	10.23	8.69	12.85

Table 5: 95% confidence intervals for “Channel choice by tenure” (Figure 12)

	Owned outright		Buying on mortgage		Rent from Council		Rent from RSL		Rent privately	
	Min%	Max%	Min%	Max%	Min%	Max%	Min%	Max%	Min%	Max%
In person	10.29	16.37	7.79	11.60	16.80	23.27	16.42	26.03	12.81	19.02
telephone	56.47	65.20	56.87	63.17	63.79	71.35	42.33	54.08	48.57	57.04
email	6.95	12.22	11.67	16.13	1.02	3.39	5.04	11.51	8.73	14.12
website	2.38	5.95	5.55	8.89	0.77	2.96	2.74	8.05	4.77	9.08
letter	9.17	15.00	7.30	11.02	6.09	10.55	12.50	21.31	10.08	15.77

Table 6: 95% confidence intervals for “Channel choice by age” recoded (Figure 13 b)

	44 or under		45 or above	
	Min%	Max%	Min%	Max%
In person	51.06	60.52	35.98	45.34
Telephone	54.28	58.97	37.49	42.13
Email	72.13	81.99	16.68	26.33
Website	72.90	85.38	12.99	25.04
Letter	51.03	61.98	35.83	46.71