Digital inclusion beyond the pandemic: call to action for a sector-wide strategy

APS Conference 2023
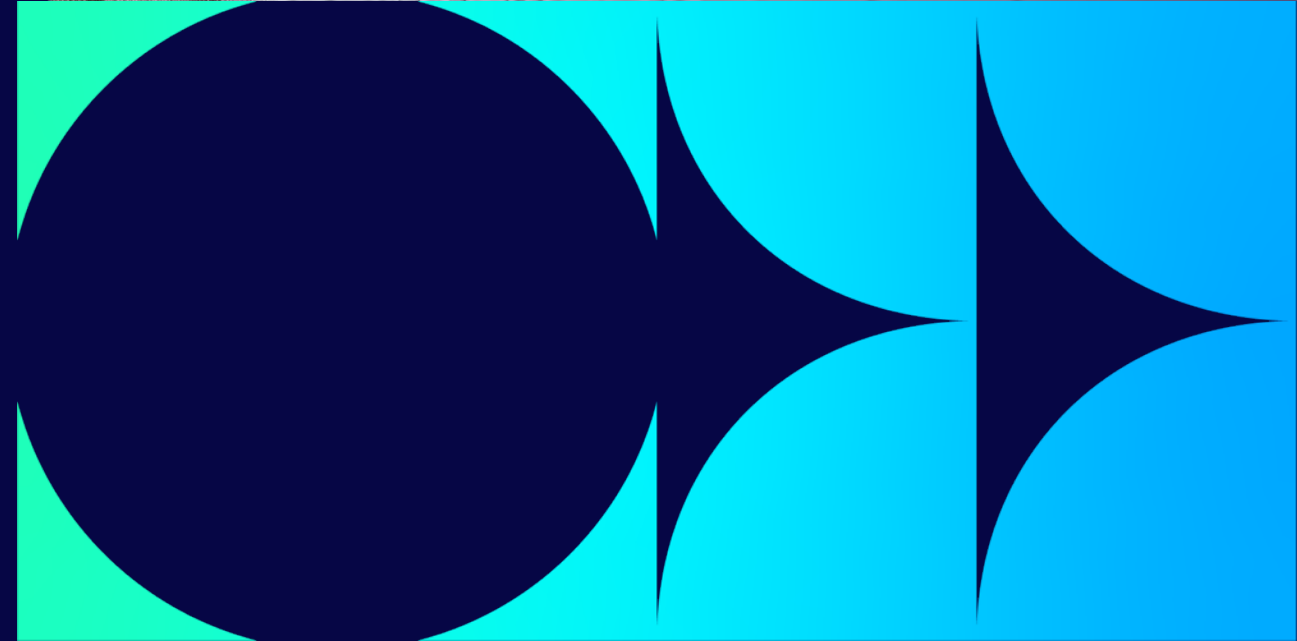
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26th April 2023

The Open University

bcs
The Chartered
Institute
for IT

#joining
the dots
#digitalinclusion

digital
poverty
alliance
community board partner

THE

Research into digital exclusion

Findings from studies into the impact of digital exclusion

- Over half of students experienced digital exclusion during the pandemic (OfS, 2020) and **access to broadband and study spaces** were the most significant issues (Barber, 2021)

- **Intersectionality of poverty and race** – disproportionate impact of digital exclusion on students from BAME backgrounds (Jisc, 2021)

- Digital exclusion a greater **risk for people with mental illness** (Spanakis et al. 2022) and it can impact on **mental health** (Metherell, et al, 2022)

- **Care experienced students** more at risk (McGhee et al, 2020)

- **Long Covid** and implications for widening participation (106k people <25) as more likely to impact students already disadvantaged (Dickinson, 2021)

- **Cost of living crisis** – Minimum Digital Living Standard is a positive step

Impact of digital exclusion on distance learners

Analysis of data from 869 OU students responding to survey in September 2021

Factors that negatively impact study for the following groups

			Struggling in studies	Disability	Lowest 2 IMD quintiles	Black / Asian	Women
📶	No/poor broadband connection/speed	12%		✔	✔		
👥	Others needing internet/PC at home	11%	✔	✔		✔	✔
💻	No suitable device to work with	3%		✔	✔	✔	
£	Cost of broadband	6%	✔	✔	✔		✔
🚫	No dedicated study space	44%			✔		✔

Digital exclusion beyond the pandemic

Thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with OU students facing digital exclusion

- **Loss of study spaces** – more distractions, less privacy and physical discomfort in spaces that are not designed for focussing
- Students **prioritising others** in their household impacted on their time, study space and access to devices
- **Low/no broadband connections** have a negative impact on students' studies and some have to travel to different locations for WiFi
- Some students have old devices with **reduced functioning** and cannot afford replacements, impacting on their studies
- **Offline study materials** can benefit students experiencing digital exclusion.
- **Impact of long Covid** on some students' studies and study intensity
- Some students working from home struggle with a **lack of delineation between work/ study spaces** – loss of motivation and screen fatigue

#joiningthedots #digitalinclusion #uktechleaders

A joined-up response by UK tech leaders communities and associated organisations:
1) Find out what digital inclusion initiatives are out there and who are already involved
2) How tech leaders individually, their organisations or communities can get involve

24 April 2023

Tech Leaders Communities

#joiningthedots with Digital Inclusion Initiatives

Information gathering undertaken by Freddie Quek from 12 Jan 2021 on behalf of the Tech Leaders Communities

What is the problem?

"**Digital Poverty** - The inability to interact with the online world fully - when, where and how an individual needs to"

Digital Poverty Alliance

DIGITAL PARTICIPATION
DIGITAL POVERTY
DIGITAL INCLUSION
DIGITAL INCLUSION
DIGITAL ACCESS
DIGITAL EXCLUSION
DIGITAL DIVIDE
DIGITAL INCLUSION
DIGITAL EXCLUSION
DIGITAL POVERTY
DIGITAL PARTICIPATION
DIGITAL ACCESS
DIGITAL DIVIDE
DIGITAL INCLUSION
DIGITAL PARTICIPATION
DIGITAL INEQUALITY
DIGITAL INEQUALITY
DIGITAL EXCLUSION

Complex Social Context

HAVE		HAVE NOT
CAN	V.S.	CAN NOT
WILL		WILL NOT

#JoiningtheDots at local, regional, national & international levels

BCS

Purpose
Making IT good for society.

Vision
A competent and ethical profession that is diverse, inclusive and plentiful in talent at all levels and for a society that is resilient and thriving in the digital world with access to the technology, knowledge and skills required.

Mission
To ensure the digital journey is safe and positive for everyone, by raising standards of competence and conduct across the IT industry and tackling the ethical challenges we face along the way.

BCS Digital Divide SG

Purpose
Leave no one digitally behind.

Vision
An active group of informed and skilled leaders who inspire, advise and direct BCS efforts through fulfilling its goal of fixing the Digital Divide.

Mission
To provide leadership and technical expertise enabling BCS involvement in effecting real, lasting and permanent change that closes the Digital Divide.

BCS Digital Divide SG

Digital Poverty Alliance

Purpose
Convene, collaborate and increase sustainable capacity within the digital ecosystem.

Vision
To live in a world which enables everyone to access the life-changing benefits that digital brings.

Mission
To end digital poverty once and for all by 2030.

Digital Poverty Alliance website

#joiningthedots Dashboard

2023 APR

#joiningthedots #uktechleaders communities and partners involved in digital inclusion initiatives

DIGITAL INCLUSION

Device	Data Connectivity	Tech Support	Motivation & Confidence	Digital Skills	Tech Career Opportunities	Safety and Security	Inclusive Design	Connect & Communicate	Research and Data
Action Area 1a	Action Area 1b	Action Area 2a	Action Area 2b	Action Area 3	Action Area 4	Action Area 6	Action Area 7	Action Area 5	Action Area 8

DESIRED OUTCOME

Appropriate device per person	Sufficient and affordable data plans	Technical support for supporters of beneficiaries & beneficiaries	Support to address fear, confidence, motivation, capability	Essential digital skills	Career talks, apprenticeship, work placement, mentoring	CyberSafe practices	Appropriate content & user experience	Socialise and mobilise via network of networks	Understand landscape of digital poverty in UK

SIGNPOST

National DeviceBank — Good Things Foundation	National DataBank — Good Things Foundation, Nominet, Virgin Media, Vodafone, Three UK; Connectivity for Third Sector — GoodCall Mobile	National Tech Support — Positive Transform Grp, Unisys, ServiceNow, Digital Poverty Alliance; Digital Skills Helpline – 0800 987 4110 — We Are Digital, Vodafone; Tech Support for the disabled — AbilityNet	Digital Confidence — Scottish Tech Army, Sky	Key Stage 3 OpenTech Skills — OpenUK; Online Centres Network (Adults) — Good Things Foundation; Digital Champions — Digital Literacy Skills, Digital Unite; Digital Education Resource Hub — Tech London Advocates	National Volunteer App — Scottish Tech Army, Digital Poverty Alliance; Career and Role Models in Tech (School Children) — Tech She Can	Online Safety — Good Things Foundation	National Catalogue of Digital Personas — BCS, Lloyds Bank Academy, Digital Poverty Alliance; National Online Classroom — Oak National Academy; Young Adults — YMCA, WCIT	National Digital Poverty Alliance — Digital Access for All, IET, Currys; DPA Community Hub — Digital Poverty Alliance; #JoiningtheDots — Community of 13 IT communities	UK Evidence Review — Digital Poverty Alliance; Consumer Digital Index and Essential Digital Skills — Lloyds Bank; Digital Youth Index — Nominet

Author: Freddie Quek, Founder of #JoiningtheDots, Community Board Member of Digital Poverty Alliance, Chair of BCS Digital Divide Specialist Group

Legend: ● Unknown ● Planning/Discussion ● Pilot/Testing ● In Progress/Available

Contribution 1 to DPA National Delivery Plan

National Tech Support Pilot	Pilot in Development

Member	Freddie Quek
My Offer	Create pilot to offer National Tech Support
My Ask	Support from DPA, BCS, Unisys, ServiceNow, #JoiningtheDots communities to scale this across UK
Team	Harry Messenger, Hannah Dowdle (Unilever), Davoud Purhossein, Simone Morris, Joanna Goldsmith (Unisys), Amit Nehru, Adam Norris (ServiceNow), Leela Damodaran (Loughborough Uni)
Comment	Pledge towards Digital Poverty Alliance's National Delivery Plan

Dimension	Details
Who	BCS, DPA, PTG, Unisys, ServiceNow, #JoiningtheDots
What	National Tech Support/Helpdesk
Where	South East England, UK
When	2023
Why	Gap in providing IT helpdesk support for rest of population outside work in society
How	Run pilot with Age Concern Southend to learn from supporting older people, then scale after

Contribution 2 to DPA National Delivery Plan

National Catalogue of Digital Personas	In Progress

Member	Freddie Quek
My Offer	Establish a national catalogue of digital personas
My Ask	Support from DPA, BCS, Unisys, ServiceNow, #JoiningtheDots communities to scale this across UK
Team	Elena Dumitrana (And Digital and DPA), David Smith, Richard Thurston, Nicola Kirk, Jemma Waters (Lloyds Bank and DPA), Leela Damodaran (Loughborough Uni)
Comment	Pledge 2 towards Digital Poverty Alliance's National Delivery Plan

Dimension	Details
Who	**BCS, DPA, Lloyds Bank**
What	**National Catalogue of Digital Personas**
Where	**UK**
When	**2022/2023**
Why	**Current digital personas do not address or reflect needs of those that are excluded – disabled, older people etc.**
How	**Work with everyone to create National Catalogue of Digital Personas**

Contribution 3 to DPA National Delivery Plan

Digital Inclusion Strategy for Higher Education Sector		Initiated on 20 Apr

Member	Freddie Quek
My Offer	Establish a call to action to have a higher education sector-wide Digital Inclusion Strategy
My Ask	Support from Times Higher Education, DPA and higher education institutions across the UK
Team	Simeon Yates (Liverpool Uni), Jeff Grabill (Leeds Uni), Leela Damodaran (Loughborough Uni), Charlotte Coles (Times Higher Education) and others tbc
Comment	Pledge 3 towards Digital Poverty Alliance's National Delivery Plan

Dimension	Details
Who	**DPA, BCS, THE, Liverpool Uni, Leeds Uni, Loughborough Uni and others tbc**
What	**Digital Inclusion Strategy for Higher Education Sector**
Where	**UK**
When	**2023**
Why	**Most unis have a digital inclusion strategy, but there is none across the higher education sector.**
How	**Work with everyone to create Digital Inclusion Strategy**

Call to Action: UK's Higher Ed Digital Inclusion Network

Closing plenary session on 20 April at Digital Universities Week 2023 hosted by University of Leeds

Universities signed up

- The Open University
- University of Bristol
- De Montfort University
- University of Leeds
- University of Liverpool
- University of Staffordshire

Supported by

- BCS
- Digital Poverty Alliance
- #JoiningtheDots community of 13 #UKTechLeaders communities
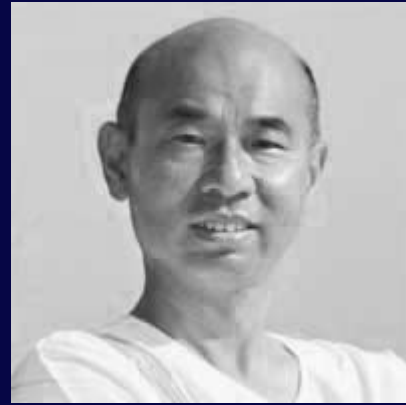- Times Higher Education

Get in touch and share:

1. What projects/initiatives are you currently involved in either within your institution or independently that address digital inclusion?
2. What commitment could you make to support a sector wide Digital Inclusion Network?

Thank you

If you would like find out more or collaborate, we'd love to hear from you!

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