DIGITAL STRATEGY

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Image provided by Microsoft Office Online

Heart of Teesdale Digital Strategy

Contents

1 Introduction

This digital strategy accompanying research report and digital toolkit were commissioned by *The Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership,* 2011 in preparation for a stage 2 Heritage Lottery Fund Application.

In preparing this strategy, research has been undertaken in a variety of areas in order to establish the overall implications of using digital technology within a national context and takes the reader from published research to consultation with organisations in the region, consultation with other *Learning Partnerships,* analysis of relevant local and national projects, consultation with partners and potential partners, consultation with potential projects for this *Learning Partnership* and a training analysis.

Interpreting the research, the strategy aims to investigate how digital technology may engage people in rural Teesdale, County Durham with their heritage and landscape. It was hoped that digital technology would interest individuals of all ages in the potential projects that the Partnership could deliver, the test being whether the technology would be feasible in the rural landscape.

Looking at the interests and skills in the region, the strategy aims to match these to the digital technologies that will hopefully work within the beautiful Teesdale landscape. With careful planning, some of Teesdale's hidden gems may soon be available to be discovered by audiences all over the world and a new pride and ownership will be felt by the people of Teesdale.

2 Aims and Objectives

2. 1 <u>Aims</u>

2.11   To explore the use of digital technology for audience engagement with all ages

2.12   To expand global awareness of Teesdale's nature and heritage through digital media

2.13   To provide a platform for projects to share their work, experiences and skills

2.2 <u>Objectives</u>

2.21   To make the best use of current and emerging technology and communications

2.22   To support individuals and groups through learning, training, skills with new media

2.23   To ensure that new technology is integrated into any educational activities associated with the Partnership especially in terms of work with children and schools

2.24   To highlight how the nature and heritage elements of the Partnership might benefit from artistic, cultural and media activities to engage more widely with audiences

3   Putting Research into Practice

Having undertaken the research and understood the implications of the technology, this now needs to be put into the context of the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership Project which has groups with varying levels of skills and confidence in digital technology. The strategy needs to be mindful of the fact that the project is taking place within a rurally isolated landscape which can prevent access to some technologies.

3.1   Aligning Research with the Objectives of the Project

The project needs to be particularly mindful of the following in thinking about how digital technology will be used within the context of the HoTLP project:

- Digital technology can enhance the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership (HoTLP) project but not all project participants have confidence in IT
- The HoTLP project wishes its engagement in digital technology to be developmental and not prescriptive
- Levels of support will vary at different points within the project
- Different groups and individuals will have different needs

The following points explain how the strategy objectives can be met:

3.1.1   *To make the best use of current and emerging technology and communications*
- Some projects will be able to develop projects with emerging technology early on in the project as they are aware of what technology is involved and the regional support to develop such projects exists
- Undertake GPS and Mobile phone signal tests in the landscapes where projects may take place, one strong contender for research
- A signature project which encompasses a wide variety of emerging technology and would hopefully place the project on the map could be commissioned from the University whilst presenting mentoring to specified project participants
- Mobile phone and Social Media are areas where there is particular interest in developing projects
- Video and audio capture and creation of PDFs are areas where skills exist within Teesdale and could be taught / commissioned to add value to the project

3.1.2   *To support individuals and groups through learning, training and skills with new media*
- One-to-one discussions with shortlisted projects should be undertaken. This would provide groups with the opportunity to talk through their needs and allow a support programme to be put together. Aims and objectives of each project should be planned at this stage so that these can be easily evaluated. These one-to-one discussions should also provide opportunities to assess the suitability of digital media inclusion

- Project Information days are ways of informally telling people about a piece of technology that has been commissioned allowing projects to meet and 'skills swap'
- Training programmes can be quickly and easily established to fill in skills gaps
- Provide online training forums and a support network for projects (login in ID)

3.1.3 *To ensure that new technology is integrated into any educational activities associated with the Partnership especially in terms of work with children and schools*
- Undertake further consultation with ITSS Durham and local schools
- Use the expertise of the NGFL and Hub e-Learning Officer to look at projects to see where these can incorporate IT to make these more accessible and engaging to schools.
- Talk to local youth groups to maximise the informal learning opportunities available to Young People, particularly social media engagement
- Look at involving Children and Young People in production of digital resources so that they meet their learning needs and they feel ownership of these

3.1.4 *To highlight how the nature and heritage elements of the Partnership might benefit from artistic, cultural and media activities to engage more widely with audiences*
- Technology can be a way of visually engaging visitors to a project, 'The Stonecraft Workshops' wish to produce stonework that will be crafted and around for many years to come. They wish to use digital technology as a tool to get people to know that the work exists. It needs to be considered that traditional artwork will physically 'outlive' the technology and the two need to complement one another whilst together and able to exist without the other in the future unless budgets and policies are available to undertake the repair and upgrade of technology beyond the life of the project.
- Signature projects could meet an objective of attracting National and International attention to the project. Such a project would create a 'wow' factor but as well as creating a media and technology 'buzz', one of the expectations needs to be that due to wear, new technology and cost, such a project would have more limited lifespan than some of the other partnership projects.
- Social Media is a way of spreading the word about projects, Blogs can become viral as Tyne and Wear Museums found with the 'reblogging' of one of their images. 'Facebook' and 'Twitter' can add event information out there in real time and Channels such as 'You Tube' are great at driving traffic to sites.

3.2 Turning Projects into Digital Projects

When thinking of developing projects into potential digital projects we need to mindful of the following:

- Many of the project participants are volunteers who may not have time and the interest to create digital projects and the HoTLP does wish to retain the interest and goodwill of these groups
- The HoTLP are delivering some of the projects themselves and therefore can be experimental if time, training and budget allow.

3.2.1 Planning and Evaluating

This is essential to understanding what the individual projects are going to achieve against the HoTLP project objectives. A planning grid is an easy way to show multiple projects on one piece of paper and allows a person to establish at a glance where strengths and weaknesses lie. The grid can be overlaid with additional information and so a further stage could be to establish the format of the content that each project will produce to assess where digital technology will be produced and potentially where it could be produced. A final stage would be to look at skills, capacity and confidence to see where technology could gently be introduced as the project progresses.

3.2.3 Training

There is already an identified list of training that project participants would like and many of these reoccur. By completing individual training assessments with shortlisted projects a finalised schedule can be composed that can then be primarily offered to those that need these them and then opened out.

A mentoring or 'buddying' scheme would be beneficial but time and availability need to offset against financial implications

3.2.4 Implementation Plan

Produce a plan which:

- Allows enough time for devices that access emerging technology to be widely available
- Considers which platforms to use the technology on (apps are an example)
- Takes account of when people will have had training to deliver projects
- Introduces something new at different points in the project (not everything in first or last six months)
- Have a Media Plan to manage the above. This can help with publicity in magazines and online newspapers
- Takes account of Social Media, Blogs and Community Forum in the form of a separate delivery plan – Assign who is to update the site on a given week and produce articles to generate interest and discussion on the community forum. This needs to be interested project participants with training in pitching the content. The involvement of Young People would be really beneficial if they are the target audience.

3.3   <u>Assimilating Projects</u>

3.3.1   Initially the project participants need to meet one another and learn about the projects so that they can understand how these join together. Such an event needs to have a training emphasis encouraging groups and partners to share their project objectives and for the Project Co-ordinators to show how projects are woven together

3.3.2   Email and contact lists need to be disseminated and project interaction encouraged to initiate online discussions

3.3.3   Assign project champions to begin conversations on the preferred online project forum site, initially posting some questions for people to comment on

3.3.4   Post training events on this site to remind people to engage with this

3.3.5   Post email updates to remind people that content is being added to the site and that training events can be viewed here

3.3.6   Within the online community, set up online groups that has a shared interest in an area of the partnership or digital technology skills. Anyone with a 'log in' should be able to view these strands and contribute where they like

3.3.7   Introduce a professional support area of the 'log in' site where partners and trainers can respond to concerns and issues which can then be used as FAQ for different groups to use in the future

3.3.8   When a digital project goes live, post a link and short case study of what has been done and why (project generated)

3.3.9   Do not forget the audiences you are trying to attract, allow Young People and the public to get involved in projects, report on these and encourage them to add to the community Blog

3.3.10   Have the facility for people to share and borrow equipment, skills and volunteers online

3.3.11   Provide links to other projects (particularly Landscape Partnerships)

3.3.12   Allow opportunities for people to find out about other funding and training to add value to projects

3.3.13   Encourage groups to arrange informal gatherings and invite others to attend

3.4   Appropriate Technologies

The toolkit introduces appropriate free software to use to deliver the objectives of the project as well as guidance on using this.

3.4.1   Available on the Web

- Project website. In order to engage with the project, people need to know what is happening.
    - A website discussion forum can provide this link for the local community
    - Visitors to the area need to be able to access a site to engage with the work of the groups and project. Project participant engagement site (log in or Ning type site)
- Podcasts and Audio files. Audio files are not too onerous and are a good way into digital technology. *Radio Teesdale* can provide training in interview techniques and can manage files produced early on in the project, allowing these to be linked to the project website as soon as possible
- Web cams showing time lapse photography along the river (technology already exists to use this tapping into businesses)
- Video – this can be hosted on 'You Tube' (see toolkit)
- PDFs of walks and transcripts of audio files, reports etc (cannot be tampered with and are small in file size)

3.4.2   Mobile technology

(Further signal strength needs testing in the appropriate areas due to trees etc)

- QR codes trails for landscape areas where there is a reliable mobile phone connection
- GPS generated material for areas where there is a strong Wi-Fi connection using WiMax (possible charge payable) and can incorporate augmented reality
- Audio, enhanced and video Podcasts and audio trails for walks and tours (points in town where hosting website can be accessed to download from would be useful for visitors)
- Apps (need to consider appropriate platform for audiences) and whether GPS is integrated into the programme (augmented reality is possible - see toolkit link)

3.4.3   Hosting Material

- 'Flickr' for digital archives
- Cloud sites such as 'SlideShare' and 'Windows Live Mesh' to host copies of reports etc
- 'Eventbrite' for managing events
- 'SurveyMonkey' for quick evaluations and questionnaires

3.4.4   Social Media

- 'Facebook' for communicating with audiences of all ages, adding events, images and updates, opportunity for social interaction
- 'Twitter' as a quick way of letting someone know what is happening and interacting with the project

- 'Flickr' for discussions focused around images
- 'Blogs' way of getting responses, interaction and more information

3.4.5   <u>Advanced Technology</u>
- 3D models
- Interactive apps
- Games
- 3D scanning
- Virtual reality
- Use of 'switch boards'

(The above are all possible but really need specialist knowledge and the appropriate budget to realise)

3.5   Acquiring Technology

3.5.1   To realise the ambition of using digital technology to produce material for the project then the following are required:

- A Website to pull together the content created by the project. Some dedicated administration of this would be necessary
- An individual project page for each group in the project to outline contact details and their project aims etc
- Audio recording equipment – Edirol recorders and memory cards (tend to get lost so back-ups are required) These cost in the region of £300
- Flip Camera and memory cards. Flip cameras cost approx £80
- Digital cameras to capture images
- Computers to download and edit to (Macs good for video but complicated for non users). A membership for groups to use NeST may be considered
- PCs, the internet and printers to generate QR codes, social media files etc
- Social Media accounts for the project. TweetDeck could be used to update all in one go
- Ideally different types of Smart phones to test user generated content if this is to be produced
- Podcasting software (approx £10) if audio tracks are to be made available on iTunes (can still make these available on HoTLP website / Radio Teesdale if not)

3.5.2   To make digital material accessible to the public, the following are required:

- MP4 players to hire out to groups to view video trails. Cost around £35 for a device with a 2.8" screen that can access 'You Tube' videos
- MP3 players for audio tours. The Bowes Museum purchased these for approximately £5 each and in 3 months only one has broken (used 22 times)
- Charging and downloading facilities for the above including computers
- Cleaning equipment for earphones
- Printer and Computer to print PDFs

The Toolkit provides advice and signposting on using the above equipment where possible

3.6 Engaging the Public with the Project

The Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership will inspire people to celebrate the unique beauty and character of the area, and benefit from its rich cultural heritage and potential. The following will make some suggestions of how digital technology could help people to see the project delivered:

3.6.1 *To understand the historic value of the local landscape and how it has been shaped over time.*
- Provide videos and audio files on the site; social media interaction; downloadable trails

3.6.2 *To conserve or restore the built and natural features that characterise the area*
- Provide information updates and a section for how the public can become involved

3.6.3 *To take action to protect the local environment and wildlife, and increase biodiversity*
- To provide webcams to show specific locations in the environment over a period of time. Record and submit data to websites such as *Durham Biodiversity Partnership* and *ERIC*

3.6.4 *To draw on the historic and cultural legacy of artists, scientist and others who have explored the area and foster creativity and imagination through art , crafts and other media*
- Create blogs to generate discussion and information on famous visitors to the area, use digital media to create a signature piece or a film of art taking place in the landscape

3.6.5 *To enhance the quality and amenity value of public and community spaces, key views and settings for enjoyment and learning*
- To create new trails (digital and printable), audio guides and mobile phone based guides

3.6.6 *To engage individuals and communities in learning, training, skills and new technology to understand and interpret the local landscape, traditions and heritage and improve access, especially by those who might be disadvantaged or excluded from activities*
- Provide online access to sites using web cams etc. Deliver digital training programmes and advertise training and sharing days digitally. Post new research on the website

3.6.7 *To promote opportunities for cooperation, mutual support and volunteering within the community to develop strategies and action so that the benefits of partnership can be sustained long term*
- Use the website as an online community platform to share skills, knowledge and experiences. Provide online opportunities for people to engage in dialogue and

ultimately volunteer in the project. Ensure that the website is sustainable so exists beyond the life of the project and could be updated by trained volunteers.

3.7   Driving the Wider Community to the Site

To engage the general public with the project, resources need to be advertised on sites where they will generate interest and drive traffic back to the site.

3.7.1   'You Tube' is one the most visited sites and as well as hosting video will enable visitors to find the HoTLP site. It is important to take the time to 'tag' video so that it is found and commented on.

3.7.2   Ask as many projects and partners to publicise the HoTLP project link on their websites as possible

3.7.3   Engage with different social media platforms (can be done through one careful message on TweetDeck or Hootsuite)

3.7.4   Look at the possibility of a signature high profile project or unique project that will capture national attention. Market this to online magazines etc

3.7.5   Ensure that groups keep their networks informed with what the project is doing

3.7.6   Capture emails and send out e-newsletters

3.7.7   Ensure that the digital technology is available to visitors to the area and that they know where it can be accessed from

3.7.8   Try to be inclusive in the technology used (transcripts for the deaf, audio description for the blind where budget allows etc)

3.7.9   Offer public event information on the website and details of where to sign up to support projects

3.7.10 Provide simple device that can be hired so that everyone can engage with the project

3.8   Supporting the Needs of the Local Community

Teesdale is a rural area set on the edge of the North Pennines and therefore has a small community which in areas is sparsely populated. It is therefore essential that community engagement is a large part of this strategy as the project provides a new way of engaging with remote communities.

The HoTLP needs to provide the opportunity for the community to:

3.8.1   Physically Engage with the Project
- Provide local access points where the local community can engage with the website and project. This is essential to its acceptance and dissemination
- Ensure that the project website is kept up to date

3.8.2   Have pride and ownership of the project
- Provide opportunities to attend briefings and activity days, sign up to volunteer, able to become fans of the project and comment on discussion boards
- Have a place where the community can email their suggestions for future project developments and add to knowledge where possible
- Look at engaging Young People to act as champions and manage some social media

3.8.3   Promote the project to visitors to the area
Ensure that the community know:
- Where the technology can be found in the environment and how to recognise it
- What is WiMax, and where it can be obtained from and cost
- what equipment is needed to access what
- The location of MP3 and MP4 devices for hire
- where Wi-Fi is available in town
- Whether there a charge for printing information and where can be undertaken

4 Recommendations for the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership

Planning Who will Deliver Digital Technology Projects
- Clarify the shortlist of projects and match this against projects who have already expressed an interest in digital technology
- Undertake one-to-one planning sessions with each project to map their objectives against the project aims and establish how you will monitor if these are being achieved
- Establish what the final product will be for each project. Could digital technology be a part of this?
- Map the HoTLP as a whole to see that the project is meeting its aims and objectives (can be done simply on a planning grid)
- Look where low level and high level digital technology is planned and where it could be added and write into a short plan
- Look at HoTLP led projects, who will lead these and where will support come from?
- Establish that funding is in place to support these projects
- Decide if an external signature project is affordable and would be beneficial to the profile of the site

Training
- Plan a series of days where groups can get to know each other throughout the project
- Contact identified trainers in the area to begin a training plan, matched to identified training needs and timescales (those identified in this report and from planning above)
- Contact other partners to establish who else is able to support training
- Establish who can act as project champions and make sure that they are confident in supporting the project
- Identify and assign project 'buddies' where enthusiasm is high but confidence low
- For champions in social media etc, ensure that these individuals are supported in knowing how to put together a plan for who will do what and when
- Ensure that training is open to groups and to project partners
- Ensure that groups have a place to put their training into practice
- Establish an online sharing element of the website for groups to share experiences
- Send out regular training updates and opportunities
- Have repeat training opportunities if there is demand for these

Website
- Ensure that there is a hub that can act as a portal for all of the material produced by the project
- Consider providing each group with a static page outlining their contact details and objectives of their project
- Be clear to label what each section is for; community, getting interactive etc so that this makes it easier for different audiences to use
- Ensure that events open to the community are present on the site (these can be easily booked with Eventbrite – see toolkit)
- Provide a blog for community engagement (see toolkit)

- Ensure that some social media is available and that this is managed by project volunteers (see toolkit)
- Ensure that all technology that is available can be downloaded in a format where it can be used 'in the field'.
- Ensure that the website highlights where people can access, borrow and hire equipment. (TIC, NeST, Library, The Witham Hall?)
- Have clearly marked and easily accessible PDFs of trails, etc so that these can be printed
- Possibly have a team of volunteers who can 'transcribe' technology into PDFs and add images for those without technology
- Have a paid administrator who can upload information to the site and ensure that feeds are working from other sites. This keeps things professional
- Provide either a community login or 'Ning' Type site to post project training and case studies / discussion forums – ensure that an individual or group of individuals take responsibility for ensuring this is up to date

<u>Technology</u>
Consider using the following technology:

Use	Type of technology	Device
Walking/ car/ bike trails, can include historical and architectural guides and music	Podcasts, audio files, Guided 'You Tube' videos	MP3 of MP4 players downloaded in advance of walk from website (after capture on Edirol recorder)
art trails – finding specific points of interest in the landscape / environment and receiving information	QR Codes (need good mobile signal in area but not GPS)	Mobile phone with bar code scanner. Phone needs to be able to browse the internet
Interactive learning trails in towns	GPS – some Apps, *OOKL, Create-A-Scape, Foursquare*	Smart phone where GPS signal is strong further testing required
Films of projects	'You Tube'	Able to be downloaded from website after capture on flip camera
Timelapse films and photography	webcams	outside support required with maintaining these and broadband connection
Images	'Flickr'	Hosted on Flickr but can also be blogged
Interactive experiences	Games and apps 3D modelling, virtual reality	Can be complicated and costly and need to consider platform – seek professional advice
Connecting live with other projects and schools at an	Video conferencing	

event		
Collecting anecdotal stories and images	Digital storytelling	website
Surveying people	'SurveyMonkey'	Can view and produce 10 question questionnaire but cannot print without upgrade
Keeping people informed and encouraging social interaction, project feedback	Social media sites and 'blogs' (see toolkit)	Website and mobile devices
Interactive maps	Google maps	You can plot information and images against the map (augmented reality)

Sections 3.4 and 3.5 provide advice on the price and type of equipment that it would be beneficial for the project to invest with

Saving Information for the Future
- Ensure that all information collected for the project is archived and referenced
- CD and tapes have a limited lifespan. Consider buying 2 x terrabyte hard drives to keep the information on. If possible, keep these in separate locations so that if one is damaged, there is still a backup

Accessing information
- Some work needs to be undertaken to ensure that as well as information being available on the web, this can be accessed by the local community and visitors to the areas in public places. Possible locations due to Wi-Fi could be:
The Witham Hall, NeST, Coffee Shops, The Bowes Museum and libraries
- Access to printers (even at a cost), Wi-Max (consider how to charge) and venues that can administer MP3/MP4 player hire at times where these are most likely to be in demand also needs consideration

Raising the Profile
Consider a signature or beacon project that raises the profile of the project and then encourage the group to look at awards. An example could be *Talk Talk Digital Heroes Awards* http://www.talk-talk.mirror.co.uk/ raising the profile of the project both nationally and locally.