

DIGITAL IS THE NEW 'D' IN DUBLIN

The open, diverse and culturally rich city of Dublin has attracted globally mobile talent to live and work here, and today digital technologies are simply new tools for innovation, according to Peter Finnegan, Dublin City Council's Director of Economy and International Relations.

In an ever changing world two realities are clear. Firstly, the concentration of population, economic activity and global connectivity is happening in and through cities. Secondly, digital technologies are touching every aspect of our lives, our economies and our societies.

These technologies are changing how we interact, how we organise and deliver services, how we discover and realise new business opportunities, and how we learn and play. In this new age of rapid global urbanisation which will see over half the global population living in cities by 2050, technology will be a key enabler in securing quality of life, economic and environmental sustainability and global competitiveness.

Dublin City embraced the opportunities and challenges of these two converging realities over a decade ago. Over those ten years the language used to describe the interaction of technology, economy and society has changed.

From Knowledge Cities, to Intelligent Cities, to Cleantech, to Smart Cities to Digital Cities, the name given describes a simple fact: creative people tackle challenges and create opportunities by innovation using digital technology as a tool.

As an open, diverse and culturally rich city Dublin has succeeded in attracting globally mobile talent to live and work here. Talented people who innovate are the key drivers of the future. This has always been the way and today digital technologies are simply new tools for innovation.

TECHNOLOGY MILESTONES

Technology milestones of discovery have marked major shifts in human civilisation. While inventions such as fire, the wheel and navigation are important, technology driven culture-jumps have been accelerated by mankind's drive to harness and control



At the launch of the 'Programmable City' project at NUI Maynooth - DCC's Peter Finnegan discussed the Dublin Dashboard with Minister Sean Sherlock and Prof Rob Kitchen of NUI Maynooth.

energy, and need to gather information and create knowledge. Today's digital revolution connects technology, information and the drive to harness and control energy for the first time.

Local government must be both facilitator and exemplar. Our responsibility is to help the city prosper while at the same time demonstrate how technology can be used to improve city services.

This means working in partnership on the one hand with business and academia to test new products and services, while on the other hand seeking to apply innovative solutions within our business.

Many cities around the globe have encouraged business growth by allowing the streets and public assets be used to test new products and solutions. San Jose in California is redefining such co-innovation

between public and private sectors through the establishment of Prospect San Jose. Essentially this will provide a Beta-project assessment and piloting mechanism for new ideas that are technology driven.

Globally Dublin has a good reputation for creativity and innovation. We can build and expand this reputation by learning from San Jose and others how to be more deliberate and structured in managing and making choices of what new innovations we will work with.

Global reputation is important as it helps attract investment and talent to a city. Dublin has gained its reputation, to date, in large measure by the success of Ireland's FDI strategies that gave Dublin the status of being the 'location of choice', outside of Silicon Valley, for most Global ICT and 'born on the Internet' companies.

SMART CITY INITIATIVES

IBM's forthcoming hosting of the Scottish Deputy First Minister and seven CEOs from local government to examine the smart city initiatives between Dublin and IBM is an example of promoting Dublin as a reference city internationally.

Dublin City Council works with stakeholders in the city to expand and develop that global reputation for innovation and technology. To strengthen this co-operation internationally Dublin chooses partnerships with similar 'smart/digital' cities. A unique innovation is the Digital Cities Partnership with Guadalajara Mexico's Silicon Valley. This co-operation led Mexican technology companies to assess the potential for locating in Dublin as their gateway into Europe.

Our international work involves economic development and global positioning. Today this type of connection is often built around the digital/smart agenda.

In addition to directly connecting on digital innovation we can also shape international thinking on city driven digital policies. We are currently seeking EU funding to help expand a unique city metrics approach which measures the impact of digital technologies on cities. What is measured is valued and understood.

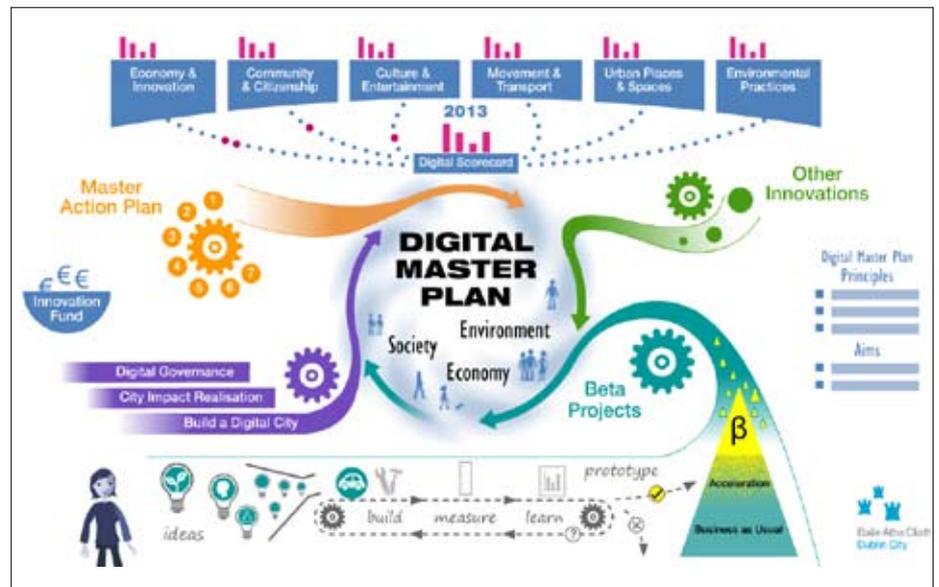
Through our membership of global bodies such as the City Protocol Society we hope to make this metric a globally accepted method for benchmarking and supporting city decision making.

SUPPORTING FDI COMPANIES

I also believe in supporting major FDI companies located in Dublin while growing new SMEs in the digital technology sectors. Multinationals, like any organisation, have internal competition for resource allocation. Irish leaders of global companies located here are always in competition for the next round of investment from their global headquarters.

As a city administration we can support these Irish-based leaders by engaging with them on innovation and testing of products, by making Dublin a reference city of innovation, and by our agility in responding to opportunity.

Recent city-led business delegations visiting multi-national R&D and corporate



HQs in Silicon Valley are also helping to keep Dublin and Ireland in the 'eye' of these corporate decision makers.

The recent agreement between Intel and Dublin City Council to roll out the first whole city sensor network, based on Gateway Units, is an example of agile decision making.

This initiative establishes a targeted co-innovation project that will expand the city's sensor capacity, while offering Intel an opportunity to gain business in other cities. Dublin acted fast on shaping this opportunity and today acting fast and wise is important.

We ensured that a key this initiative is open and allows for different makes of sensors to be used, and different companies and researchers to be involved.

The city has also promoted its digital agenda by attracting relevant international conferences. In June it hosts, with the EU Commission and Intel Labs, the Open Innovation 2.0 Conference. The Dublin Declaration on Open Innovation launched in 2013 has helped shape European Policy and the guidelines for Horizon2020. Promoting Dublin as a leading digital innovation hub is itself an innovative role change by the Council.

SMARTER CITIES CHALLENGE

Cities attract global attention by the Brand Narrative they build and project. Within an EU project we are developing a toolkit for sharing, refreshing and projecting our story of innovation and harnessing digital

technologies to help us.

Dublin's recent success in being one of 16 cities, from the 100 that originally applied, in winning IBM's Smarter Cities Challenge has helped strengthen its international standing for innovation. The IBM global expert team will help Dublin establish an action plan to harness solar to provide energy for public buildings.

Dublin City Council, he says, is a facilitator of collaboration around the Smart-Digital agenda. "Our role is to help others achieve their goals and to win the support or others in achieving our goals. We have worked with DCU on bringing Techshop from America to Dublin, which is essentially a 'gym' for innovators.

DCC has agreed with Maynooth that their 'Programmable Cities' project would create a visual dashboard for Dublin data, thereby allowing decisions makers and citizens to assess the city and to make informed decisions.

With a healthy scepticism, Finnegan does not see technology as the inevitable creator of Utopia. "While we need to build sustainable and competitive economies to underpin society, we also need to recognise that our goal must be to create a society where people are valued, nourished and engaged.

The decisions we make to deploy technology should serve that goal and be based on a human and environmental values. The more we enable citizens to co-create that future around justice, community, shared ownership and inclusion the better.