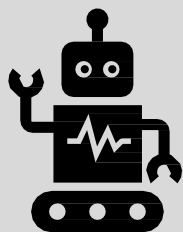


# The Balance Between Digital & Human Touch in Customer Experience



JOINT COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE MONTHLY REPORT  
*(Developed by the Research Committee)*  
APRIL 2020



## 1. Introduction

As the expectations of citizens evolve, public sector organizations are witnessing higher demand for a civic experience that is simple and seamless - similar to the experience they receive from private sector businesses<sup>1</sup>. To meet this growing demand, governments worldwide are prioritizing digital service delivery to transform the citizen experience.

Spending on “digital transformation” is rising significantly as governments invest in technology to enable greater personalization, simplicity and online customer care or self-service<sup>1</sup>.

As digital transformation initiatives increase, there is growing discussion regarding striking the right balance between human touch and digital interactions. According to a recent article published by CMS Wire, it is imperative for every organization to invest in both digital and human customer experience (CX)<sup>2</sup>.

1. [Challenges and Benefits of Digital Transformation in the Public Sector](#)
2. [Balancing the Human and the Digital in Your Customer Experiences](#)
3. [Mind the automation gap: why the human touch is critical in the public sector](#)

## The Benefits of Digital Service Delivery<sup>1</sup>

1. **Improved Operational Efficiencies:** Public sector organizations report 44% improvements in operational efficiencies according to [Keeping Score: Why Digital Transformation Matters](#).
2. **Greater Agility:** Enables government organizations to make more informed decisions through the consolidation of fragmented data.
3. **Reduced Risk:** Manual activities such as data entry can be automated, reducing the risk of human error.

Read more [here](#).

## The Benefits of Human Service Delivery<sup>3</sup>

1. **Humans Solve Problems:** Humans are able to listen, understand, gather information and apply previous lessons/experiences to situations.
2. **Humans Can Empathize:** Empathy allows humans to communicate that they understand your problem and can fix it.
3. **Humans Want Choices:** The public wants choices in how they receive service. Some may prefer to use self-service, while others prefer to talk to a person.

Read more [here](#).

## 2. Need for Balance Between Digital and Human Service Delivery

### Customer Choice

According to [Business Insider](#), although digital service delivery is a driver to meet the needs of customers, the human element is more important to capture and appeal to the public<sup>1</sup>. COO of Synchrony Financial, Kurt Grossheim, highlights that it all comes down to choice.

“Different people want different things. Some people want to self-serve online — up to a certain degree of complexity. Others prefer to immediately seek human assistance. This ‘spectrum of comfort’ is what helps ensure a seamless integration of quality service, regardless of where a customer goes to seek that service.”<sup>1</sup> - Kurt Grossheim

Now more than ever, organizations must find a way to create an experience that blends the need for digital with the customers’ desire for authentic, personalized human interaction<sup>1</sup>.

### Choosing the Appropriate CX Technique

In order to provide great CX, it is vital to know the moments when you need to retain or introduce the human touch<sup>2</sup>. For example, an address change can be simply done using digital means, but as customers experience issues online, the human interaction becomes imperative to the experience. Customers want reassurance that a human will be available to resolve their issues quickly and with minimal effort.

According to [CMS Wire](#), when determining the mix of human vs. digital and how that balance will meet the needs of current and future customers, two key areas are important to consider<sup>2</sup>:

1. Having an **omnichannel CX strategy** will help ensure the needs of all customers are satisfied
2. **Gathering feedback and improving services** at the end of an interaction to understand need and build relationships

### 3. How Does Digital Transformation Impact Vulnerable Groups?

[According to a recent article published by the Guardian](#), the spread of technology is changing the welfare system worldwide and negatively impacting vulnerable populations. The [article](#) reports that governments are automating poverty by transitioning key services



(i.e. unemployment benefits, child support, housing, food subsidies, etc.) online<sup>1</sup>. This consequently turns the needs of vulnerable groups into numbers, replacing the empathy, judgment, and decision-making of human caseworkers with machines.

The Guardian has reportedly spent three months investigating the way that billions of the world's most vulnerable population are directly impacted by AI innovations. Reporters of the Guardian have labeled it the birth of the [“digital welfare state”](#)<sup>2</sup>.

Click [here](#) to read the Automating Poverty Series— An exploration of how government AI innovations impact the vulnerable.

1. [Digital dystopia: how algorithms punish the poor](#)
2. [How Britain's welfare state has been taken over by shadowy tech consultants](#)

### 4. Covid-19 Forces A Move Towards Digital Service Delivery

The Covid-19 context has made it imperative to virtualize day-to-day operations, which has fast-tracked a radical digital transformation across many service provider sectors<sup>1</sup>. In a short time, many physical processes that could swiftly be digitized have become virtual. Some notable examples include:

- ❖ **Telework:** [Federal public servants being advised to telework](#)
- ❖ **Remote church services:** [The Canadian clergy directing people to livestreamed services and prayers](#)
- ❖ **Telemedicine:** The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) presenting recommendations for [scaling up the use of telemedicine](#)
- ❖ **Remote learning:** [Canadian universities and colleges closed in response to Covid-19](#)

Notwithstanding the challenges of harnessing digital service delivery on a previously unknown scale in Canada, the fact that citizens have access to these digital services is critical. A [recent report](#) suggests that success lies ‘where technology complements the human element of the customer experience without creating new frustrations’. We look forward to seeing which best practices will emerge from service providers during this unprecedented time<sup>2</sup>.

1. [How The COVID-19 Pandemic Is Fast-Tracking Digital Transformation In Companies](#)
2. [The digital lessons from COVID-19](#)



## For further reading

- [Service Canada told key to boosting use of online services is human touch](#)
- [Improving government services in 2020](#)
- [Improving IT and operational performance with human centered design, customer experience practices](#)
- [Computer says no: the people trapped in universal credit's 'black hole'](#)

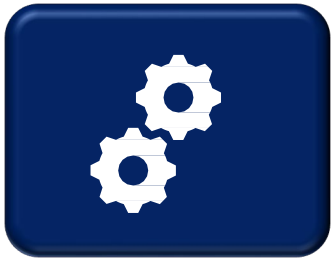


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## Daily Newsletter: Trends This Month March 2020



### Digital Divides

Covid-19 has forced the closing of schools and workplaces, with remote working and e-learning being installed as temporary fixes. Despite these resolutions, it is noteworthy that a digital solution is not available to everyone. This scenario has shed light on preeminent digital divides. Read more [here](#).



### Privacy Rights

Governments worldwide are turning to tech companies, including Google and Facebook, as part of an effort to use phone location data to track and fight the coronavirus pandemic. This government effort is complicated by privacy concerns. Read more [here](#). Could the use of phone location data be okay? Read more [here](#).



### Government IT Modernization

As the world becomes more digital, a revamp of government IT systems becomes all the more crucial; governments worldwide are modernizing their IT systems in different [ways](#), including developing homomorphic encryption to prevent cyberattacks, delivering national ID systems to limit fraud, adopting “zero-trust” security frameworks and launching cloud-enabled governments.

## Other noteworthy articles this month:

[Canadians Are Ready to Embrace Digital Identity: DIACC Survey Finds 70 Per Cent of Canadians Want to See Governments Work With the Private Sector to Implement Digital](#)

[Pandemics, Privacy, and Confidential Data Security: Managing Information Risk is Critical](#)

[Governments Find New Ways to Develop and Retain Talent](#)

[Could Spiral Tech Development Lead to the End of Agile?](#)

[Digital Leaders Offer Tips to Ease Mass Migration to Telework](#)

[Nunavut government has spent \\$5M to cope with November ransomware attack](#)

## Research Repository

Access the Citizen First Research Repository [here](#).