



Joint Councils Executive Report on Trends this Month

Service Delivery and Artificial Intelligence were key topics of discussion this month.

Key Insights – Service Delivery:

- ✓ One area for improvement in designing services, [according to Public Technology's digital and data specialist](#), is to designing them with a view to making them as easy to implement as they are to use. "It is very important to understand the full process – it is not just about the citizen. [...], they have a resource that no departments are using."
- ✓ [A recent report](#) commissioned by The Accessibility Centre in Australia found that the majority of government websites are underperforming, with the best site scoring 4.6 out of 10. Furthermore, 66% of documents failed an accessibility check. These results emphasize the importance of accessibility and flexibility in government websites.
- ✓ Read about Australia's Digital Service Standard by the Digital Transformation Agency [here](#).
Noteworthy Articles related to Service Design & Improvement:
[Utah.Gov Launches First Utah State Government Google Home App.](#)
[Manitoba announces e-Registration.](#)
[Une question pour Ottawa? Un robot pourrait bientôt vous répondre](#)

Key Insights – Artificial Intelligence:

Artificial intelligence is fuelling a new cyber security race, [say experts](#). A growing list of corporate and government offices say that infiltrations are their top worry. Governments could start making use of machine learning to detect insecurities and vulnerabilities. "AI is needed to keep up with threats by automating defence responses to growing machine-on-machine attacks launched by sophisticated hackers," says the Canadian manager for U.K.-based Darktrace.

Canadian businesses are slower to adopt new technology than their European and American counterparts, [according to Canada's head of Amazon Web Services](#). Dispelling the "complicated" and "scary" reputation of artificial intelligence and machine learning is needed in order to seize new opportunities.

Noteworthy Articles related to Artificial Intelligence:

[Could New York City's AI Transparency Bill Be a Model for the Country?](#)

By Government Technology

[Internal CSIS document details 'mega trends' set to alter economy, society, security.](#)

By The Globe and Mail

[The Future of Human Work is Imagination, Creativity and Strategy.](#)

By Harvard Business Review

January Feature: Innovation and Behavioural Insights in Service Delivery

According to the [Federal, Provincial, Territorial Declaration on Public Sector Innovation](#), “in order to achieve meaningful and lasting results for the people [they] serve, governments need to work in new and inventive ways with a greater focus on what works and what doesn’t. Innovation can do more than just drive strong economic growth. It has the potential to solve the big challenges that we face as Canadians.”

Behavioural insights have proven to be one tool in the innovation toolkit to improve service delivery and outcomes for society. Indeed, several jurisdictions have embraced the power of “nudging”, including Behavioural Insights [UK](#), [Australia \(NSW\)](#), and the [US](#). Indeed, in Canada, we identified at least 3 jurisdictions who have or are conducting behavioural research right now. They include [Ontario](#), [British Columbia](#) and [the Federal Government](#), but we have also identified more examples.

With such a breadth of information around the topic, we thought it would be interesting to focus in on a few examples where nudging has made a remarkable difference.

We looked to EY, as they have published the EY Global GPS Macroeconomic and Policy Outlook 2018,¹ which identifies areas where the public sector could have the greatest impact on national economies. According to this report, key trends that EY identified as shaping the macroeconomic and policy landscape in 2018 include investments in infrastructure, education and the way that data is used.

So here are some ideas of how behavioral insights can be used, or in the case of data, identified to make service improvements. These ideas provide some insights into how to get the most out of using behavioural insights, regardless of the focus area, so we have highlighted this too.

[Infrastructure Example](#)

The Mayor’s Office of New Urban Mechanics, in Boston, focuses on examining how new technology, designs and policies can “strengthen the partnership between residents and government and significantly improve opportunities and experience for all.” (p.322)

The Office tested the effects of “operational transparency” as a method of “increasing trust, support and engagement in government” among city residents (p.322). The Office sent images of city

¹ PDF is available on request. Please email amanda@parriagggroup.com

workers performing public service requests to city residents in the test group, and no images to city residents in the control group. These requests included services such as filling potholes and removing graffiti and were sent via an app used to submit public service requests to government.

The impact of these interventions was measured by the number of public service requests as well as the number of service request categories by resident, after receiving the pictures. In the months after the testing, those residents who received the pictures sent in 19.6 percent more service requests to the government, and in 9.3 percent more categories, as compared to those residents who did not receive pictures.

What made this worth highlighting

The intervention used an app that was already in service to improve the trust and engagement of residents with the city. Increased civic engagement in the area of public service requests could mean addressing public service needs quicker, saving money and increasing citizen trust in government. It also highlights the opportunity to prioritize both maintenance and infrastructure investments based on client needs by providing examples of existing works being completed.

Education Example

UK's Department of Business, Innovation and Skills carried out an experiment where they sent text messages to some English and Math adult learners (experimental group) and not others (control group). The messages focused on teaching beliefs taken from behavioral insights. Results showed that attendance increased by seven percent for adult learners who received the text messages compared to those who did not. Further, the dropout rate of students who received the texts increased by 36 percent compared to those who did not receive the texts.

What made this worth highlighting

Other public education institutions in the UK have begun exploring using behavioral insights such as these to increase attendance and reduce attrition; the net effect could be an increase in overall adult literacy and numeracy in the United Kingdom.

Using Data to identify opportunities for behavioural change

The Business Improvement Office in the UK has examined the behavioral insights behind the traffic collisions in East Sussex (p.23). This has led to a deeper understanding of the factors that are part of an accident where someone is killed or seriously injured. For example, this research has identified that motorcyclists,

the young (under 25), and people in early middle age (45 to 65 interacting with vulnerable road users) are disproportionately more likely to be involved in these accidents.

What made this worth highlighting

The behavioral insights have led to the testing of different interventions for each target group expected to be involved in these types of collisions: two variations of letters for drivers at risk of dangerous driving. In addition, the effects of targeted communications on the anniversaries of driving offences or minor collisions for all three groups will be tested.

The value of this approach is that “we have avoided designing interventions that are doomed to fail because the target audience is not doing the behaviour the interventions are designed to inhibit, or because the interventions target a group of people who are not behaving dangerously” (p.25).

Health Example

For those of you looking for additional great ideas related to behavioural insights, we have also included this health example:

The Behavioral Insights Team started as a UK government office and grew into a social impact company. They conducted an experiment on the psychological dimensions of decision-making. In New Orleans, LA, they team worked with the Health Department and a network of public health organizations to experiment, using behavioral insights, on the best way to encourage low-income individuals who had not visited a primary care physician in more than two years to use a free visit.

They tested different ways of inviting people to take up the appointment. Recipients were randomly assigned to receive one of three messages: “an information only text; a message that invited recipients to ‘take care of yourself so you can care for the ones you love’; and a message that tells recipients ‘you have been selected,’ building on research that making people feel unique can prompt action” (p.11).

This message identifying the recipient as having been selected was 40% more effective at getting people to agree to schedule an appointment than the basic information message. And of note, the message that asked recipients to ‘take care of yourself so you can take care of the ones you love,’ was worse at getting recipients to schedule the health care visit when compared to recipients who only received the basic information.

What made this worth highlighting

This example examines the psychological barriers that citizens may face in take-up of services offered to prevent larger future spend.

Continuing the Conversation on Digital Strategy

As we forge ahead with reflections and discussions on what should be included in a digital strategy, Harvard Business Review has published an article that takes the position that [Digital Strategy Does Not Equal IT Strategy.](#)

We would love to hear from you!

Let us know about your digital strategy so we can share it in a future Executive Report. Or send us your suggestions for a special topic that we can feature. All feedback is welcome and will help us to build a product that best meets your needs. Feedback and contributions can be sent to us at [Info@iccs-isac.org.](mailto:Info@iccs-isac.org)