

**Craig Thomler**

I've worked in the online sector since 1995 in roles including founder, publisher, journalist, webmaster, marketer, channel manager, CIO, COO and visionary. I left the public sector in early 2012 to lead Delib Australia as Managing Director Australia and New Zealand. [More...](#)

Mobile version of this blog

Follow me on Twitter

Friend me on Google+

Profile me on LinkedIn

Follow me on FriendFeed

**Subscribe**

Posts

Comments

**Australian Government 2.0 Newspaper****Australian Government Tweets Newspaper****Gov 2.0 groups**

Gov 2.0 Australia at Google+  
OzLoop  
Online Communicators' Forum  
Govloop - Gov 2.0 Australia Group  
Gov 2.0 Australia list

**Gov 2.0 and SM events**

View the full Gov 2.0 / SM calendar

Marketing and PR events (Mumbrella)

Today	←	→
Displaying events after 24/7.		
<a href="#">Look for earlier events</a>		
Displaying events until 31/8. <a href="#">Look for more</a>		
+ Google Calendar		

**Resources**

Vic Gov 2.0 Action plan  
Aust. Gov 2.0 report - 'Engage'  
Vic's Social Media 101 Primer  
A citizen's guide to Open Government, E-Government, and Government 2.0  
New media toolkit (AIDS.gov.blog)  
Community Information Toolkit  
Social media monitoring tools  
mediat40 #OzPolitics Tweetbook  
Guide to using Social media  
Twitter template strategy guide  
Twitter strategy (generic)  
USAf counter-blogging model  
Engaging bloggers  
Creating an Apps for Democracy contest  
Local Government & Municipal Knowledge Base  
Government and e-participation programs: A study of the challenges faced by institutional projects  
Social advertising best practice  
Social media policy examples  
Social media case studies  
Social networking by young people (PDF)  
Browser upgrade business case  
Public Collaborative OCR Text Correction in Australian Historic Newspapers  
Card sorting guide  
Gov 2.0 initiatives in Australia  
International Gov 2.0 examples

**Open data sites**

GovPond (combined)  
data.gov.au  
data.nsw  
Queensland government data  
data.sa  
data.vic.gov.au

**Video resources**

The machine is us - Prof Wesch  
Paradigm shift - Clay Shirky  
Us Now Documentary  
World Wide Web in Plain English  
Social Media in Plain English  
Social Networking in Plain English  
Blogs in Plain English  
Wikis in Plain English  
RSS in Plain English  
Twitter in Plain English  
Twitter Search in Plain English  
Phishing Scams in Plain English

**Tags**

accessibility | advertising | awards | blog | case study | change | channel | citizen | collaboration | communication | community | competition | conference | consultation | content | copyright | crowd source | culture | data | design | development | digital | edemocracy | education | e-government | emetrics | engagement | forum | gov20 | GOV2AU | governance | gowback | information architecture | information management | innovation | interaction | internet | intranet | law | leadership | legal | management | marketing | mashup | mobile | movie | online | open data | open policy | open source | participation | policy | politics | presentation | privacy | report | research | rich media | risk | security | service | social media | social network | standards | strategy | technology | transparency | usability | website | whole-of-government | wikis

**Archive**

► 2019 (3)  
► 2018 (6)  
► 2017 (9)  
► 2016 (61)  
► 2015 (55)  
▼ 2014 (109)  
Nov (6)  
Oct (4)  
Sep (14)  
Aug (15)  
Jul (17)  
Jun (8)  
May (8)  
Apr (5)  
Mar (12)  
Feb (12)  
Jan (8)  
► 2013 (128)  
► 2012 (192)  
► 2011 (157)  
► 2010 (222)  
► 2009 (309)  
► 2008 (377)  
► 2007 (1)

**Aust gov on social media**

Australian politicians  
Australian governments  
Commonwealth agencies  
NSW agencies  
Queensland agencies  
Victorian agencies

**Aust government blogs**

ABS - BetaWorks  
ABS - Statistically Speaking  
Aged Care Complaints  
AGIMO blog  
ALRC Review of Discovery Laws  
Austrade - eBusiness  
Austrade - Global Economy  
Austrade - ICT  
Austrade - Music  
Australian Law Reform Commission  
Family Violence Inquiry Blog  
Australian library blogs (over 45)  
Australian War Memorial blog  
Constitution day blog  
DOHA - yourHealth blog (closed)  
Flagpost - Parliamentary Library  
Government 2.0 Taskforce  
Human Rights Commission (closed)  
Innovation blog  
Job search - Job seeker blog  
Jobsearch - Employer blog  
Mosman library  
National Library of Australia  
National Portrait Gallery - Education blog  
National Portrait Gallery blog  
Office of the Information Commissioner blog  
Parks Victoria  
Powerhouse - fresh + new(er)  
Regional Knowledge - Land & Water  
Australia  
Rural Champions blog  
Standard Business Reporting blog  
Stap isi  
Sydney Observatory blog  
The Line (AICISIA)  
Vic eGov forums  
Vic Public Service Continuous Improvement Network

**Government links**

AGIMO  
Data.Australia.Gov.au  
Data.vic.gov.au  
Gov 2.0 Taskforce  
Online and Communications Council  
Vic eGovernment Resource Centre  
NSW Govt Information Office  
QLD Web Centre  
Tas eGovernment  
WA Office of e-Government  
Local government web network (NSW)  
NZ eGovernment  
NZ govt entry point  
Government of Canada  
UK gov Entry point (Directgov)  
UK Digital Diplomacy  
US gov entry point (US.gov)  
US whitehouse egov site  
US Gov web content best practice  
US government blogs  
World Bank egov centre

**Good reads**

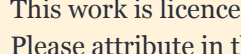
13th Floor  
Alertbox: Jakob Neilsen  
Assignment:Future  
BCM: Twocents  
Benchmarking eGov 2.0  
Chieftech's blog  
Cluetrain Manifesto  
Column Two: Step Two  
Community 2.0  
Convergence Emergence  
Dave Fletcher  
Deliberations  
Digital Democracy  
Digital Ethnography  
DonnaM (Maurer)  
E-Gov Bulletin  
E-Government News  
Electronic Journal of e-Government  
Eye Of The Storm  
Federal Info Mgmt  
Government 2.0 in Western Australia  
Government 2.0 showase  
Government Futures  
GovGab  
Govloop  
Hacking Congress  
Hackosphere  
Innovating government blog  
Intranet Life  
Intranet strategies: jmc  
Konnein (Community Management)  
Like IT Matters  
Local Gov & Municipal Knowledge Base  
Lost Art Of Blogging  
Marcom Professional  
Martin Dart Online  
Microsoft Aust Gov Affairs blog  
Municipalst  
MuniGov 2.0  
nextgov  
Open and Shut - FOI matters  
Open Forum  
Oz Pollie Tweets  
Parliamentary infographics  
Pollitics  
Presentation Zen  
Roxanne Missingham (library blog)  
Seradigm  
Seth Godin  
Social media news (Australia)  
Social Networks: Laurel Papworth  
Sphagetti Testing  
The Great Emancipator  
The Ideal Government  
The Social Organisation  
UK government Twitter use  
Fed webmasters white paper  
Web Strategy: Jeremiah  
Who's using wikis in government

**Top tools**

Balsamiq  
Basecamp  
Blist  
Browsershots  
Budget Simulator  
Comms & Engagement game  
Copperproject  
Del.icio.us  
DIY Chart  
Firefox HTML validator  
Flickr  
Google maps  
Google trends  
Govdex  
LinkedIn  
Many eyes (data visualisation)  
Mindjet  
Newsmap  
Protoshare  
Ready.Mobi  
Screencaster  
Service design tools  
Slideshare  
TextTrust  
TinyURL  
UserVoice  
VisionAustralia accessibility toolbar  
Wayback machine  
Websort  
Wordle  
Yahoo groups  
Yousendit  
Youtube

**Legal Disclaimer**

This is a personal blog. It is not officially endorsed by the Australian Government. The views expressed are those of the author or originators and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government or any other individuals or organisations.



This work is licenced under a [Creative Commons License](#).

Please attribute in the form: [Sourced from eGovAU](#)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 09, 2014

**Digital Disruption - an interview with Marie Johnson**

*This is the first in a series of interviews I'm doing as part of Delib Australia's media partnership with CeBIT in support of [GovInnovate](#). I'll also be livetweeting and blogging the conference on 25-27 November.*

[View other posts in this series.](#)

A few weeks ago I sat down with [Marie Johnson](#) to discuss her presentation at [GovInnovate](#) and the thinking behind it.

Marie Johnson, Managing Director of the Centre for Digital Business

Marie is currently the Managing Director and Chief Digital Officer of the [Centre for Digital Business](#), and as a passionate technologist and innovator has had career that has spanned Executive rolls in the corporate and public sectors.

She now advises senior public servants and corporate executives on the new capabilities required by business, government and society to meet the challenges and opportunities of the digital age.

Marie says that digital has been truly disruptive to society and is one of the most serious challenges to government administration in a century.

She believes there's two forms of disruption, unpredictable and predictable.

The unpredictable kind includes real breakthroughs in technology and new and unique emerging business models that no foresight could have predicted.

The predictable kind result from a series of incremental changes over a relatively long time – a 'long tail' of disruption based on the evolution of known technologies and business models.

While unpredictable disruption is exactly that – unpredictable and therefore difficult to plan for, the predictable kind gives organisations with the appropriate horizon scanning approaches an opportunity to prepare.

In her view government hasn't been paying enough attention to predictable forms of disruption, "some innovations have been brewing for awhile and should not be disruptive to government where it has been monitoring and horizon scanning."

Marie worries that government hasn't taken all the steps necessary to adequately prepare for known trends,

"Let's have a look at, say, the government online strategy in 2000. It looked at moving everything online while maintaining face-to-face and hard copy channels.

The strategy in 2013 said exactly the same thing – placing all high volume transactions online, but keeping hard copy transactions as well.

There's been no progression in strategy over that time, and implementation over the period has focused on channel switching, moving services and forms online with little business transformation."

Marie says this could be because digital hasn't been disruptive enough – governments in Australia have been able to stave off transformational change by creating workarounds to existing systems and processes.

However the longer transformational change is delayed, the more expensive it becomes and the more likelihood there is of ageing system failing and creating far greater disruption for governments and society.

This risk grows as governments fragment their service delivery channels, attempting to maintain existing approaches while also seeking to exploit emerging channels to citizens.

She believes there's a real opportunity at the moment for governments to be transformational in their thinking, not just linear, making interactions with government more intuitive and seamless.

For instance, Marie says, "agencies should be required to declare what they are going to put online, and what they will be taking away."

Marie used the example of car registration stickers. Now that police have number plate scanners and integrated registration databases, there's little need for drivers to display a sticker on their windscreen providing details of their car registration.

She says that most drivers' license authorities in Australia have now abandoned registration stickers, removing a lot of the process and policy that supported the issue, printing and management of the sticker process.

"Another example is in the work I did with Immigration. We took away the need to have a paper visa label in passports to enter Australia."

Marie says that Australia didn't require paper visas, but was issuing about two million of them a year due to a range of reasons including a preference by some travellers who wanted to have a paper visa as a tourism souvenir and proof of their visit.

This process involved substantial expense – the design and printing of visas, their storage and distribution, staff time in sticking them in passports and the overhead of having people come to Australian embassies Immigration posts to get them.

She says that after a review process to understand the extent of the cost of paper visas and the corresponding impact in focusing on electronic ones, the decision was made to set a price signal for paper visas.

Marie says that "the government passed legislation requiring a payment to get a paper label – the electronic visa is still required. Now the issuance of paper visas is almost negligible – saving printing, storage space, staff time, processing and more."

Marie believes there's many areas in government that could benefit from transformational rather than linear adoption of technology – changing the way systems and processes work, rather than simply replicating them digitally.

She also believes that the notion of citizen-centricity needs more consideration, "there is no citizen-centricity in government as every agency has a different viewpoint and interaction with citizens."

Instead, she says, we need to have a discussion about what services we can replace or take away, and how we inform citizens about doing so.

"This isn't about cutting essential services, but removing unnecessary complexity that feeds on itself."

She sees this issue in how government defines and manages 'ICT' projects,

"Look at audits and capability reports over the last 15 years on government 'ICT projects' – how they have failed to deliver, have been very expensive and, on occasion, led to policy failure.

We're still having the same findings today – how can that be? Why hasn't government improved and learnt from the past?"

In reality, she says, these are not ICT projects, they are focused on policy and service delivery and have simply been defined as ICT as they involve the use of technology to automate and integrate policy and service delivery.

"So when the Audit office looks at them and there's a capability review, it looks at them primarily from an IT perspective and can overlook the real reasons for project failure or who should be updating and changing their approach."

Marie says that agency ICT teams in government are under enormous stress, struggling under an increasing load of business as usual work, maintaining existing systems, with limited capital budgets for replacing legacy systems.

She says that many ICT teams are reaching the point where they have little or no capability to able to maintain existing systems, implement new business projects and innovate, "I think this is one of the challenges for the APS."

She also says that the whole issue around the client/citizen experience has only recently started to be looked at.

"In the recent government strategy, there is no mention of the client experience. Instead it speaks of heavy and light IT users and is very much a production view rather than looking at what that means for the delivery of policy and citizen experience."

Marie says her question to agencies is, "can that government strategy support the new welfare reforms from the government? My view is that it probably can't."

Marie believes government needs to focus more on becoming a platform, as increasing social complexity and advancing technology blurs and removes the lines between traditional portfolios.

"Where we have the connected car, RFID chipped livestock generating data and highly pervasive connected services – what does this mean for government services and government policy?"

"Rather than having each agency doing their thing independently and in a self-sufficient manner, like factories in the early industrial age, government needs to become more of a utility and a platform - actively sharing skills across policy and service delivery areas, rather than persisting as 'stove-piped' bureaucracies."

Marie sees one of the biggest current areas of disruption as being in finance, with emerging mobile peer-to-peer payment models, crypto-currencies and crowd-lending already beginning to disrupt traditional banking and transaction models.

"We have a lot to learn with what is happening in growing markets such as Kenya, where innovative models of payment delivery are changing how financial systems and currencies operate."

She says that in Kenya, a country with little in the way of infrastructure, phone-based peer-to-peer payments through a network of payment providers, called M-PESA, has become a leading characteristic of their economy.

Marie believes Australian bureaucrats need to look at how nations beyond the anglosphere are addressing modern challenges. She says there's many areas in our government where public policy innovation could occur through learning from what's happening in other countries.

In particular Marie says governments need to broaden the scope and range of inputs on policy development.

She discussed a [case study from the UK's Great Ormond Street Childrens' Hospital](#) (GOSH), which during the 1990s was trying to understand the very high mortality rates for surgery in congenital heart disease.

Doctors identified one high risk area being the patient's transfer from the operating room to the ICU.

They identified this complex task as being analogous to that of a pit stop in Formula One, and doctors from GOSH visited a pit crew in action in Italy to gain insights into how hospital procedures could be improved.

In a pit stop a lollipop man waves in the car and oversees all the work done to get it back on the track. All the mechanics and technicians have clearly defined roles to perform concurrently, designed so as not to interfere with each other.

The doctors videotaped the handover process in GOSH and sent it to be reviewed by the Formula One team. Out of this analysis came a new handover procedure.

The anesthetist was given the same role as the lollipop man, to step back and look at the big picture, making safety checks.

These changes led to significant reduced errors and reduced mortality rates.

Marie says this type of cross-industry learning is vital for government – looking beyond traditional sources of advice and support, "Agencies can't keep doing the same things and consulting the same people. We need to confront digital disruption."

Finally Marie said that government should offer a user experience that is on par with the very best in any other domain.

She believes the reason this doesn't happen is that there is a massive capability gap in government in what she calls 'capability architecture'.

Marie says that different parts of government, agencies and groups in agencies do their own jobs well, however there is no one specifically trained, mandated and responsible for ensuring those jobs all align and fit into the larger architecture of a policy or service.

Instead, she says, they end up being connected together by manual workarounds, third parties and individuals accessing the services.

"In other words government is creating wonderfully designed parts, but not flawless systems."

She sees a place for what she calls a 'Transformation Commission', responsible for future scanning and aiding agencies to adopt transformational techniques.

In conclusion Marie believes that that fossilised ICT systems that are not fit for purpose for the future are becoming a critical concern for agencies.

However if government can adopt a transformational approach to policy and service delivery, improve internal and external collaboration, improve its trend detection and reaction, and connect all these disparate threads together, Marie sees a much brighter future ahead.

You'll be able to hear more from Marie at [GovInnovate](#) on 25-27 November.

More of Marie's thinking is available through her blog posts, including:

- The Digital Disruption of Government  
<https://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20140406120640-28199609-the-digital-disruption-of-government?trk=mp-reader-card>
- Calling for Digital Disruption - Not Business as Usual  
<https://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20140505143938-28199609-digital-disruption-not-business-as-usual?trk=mp-reader-card>
- Digital Disruption & Welfare Reform  
<https://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20140812035825-28199609-digital-disruption-welfare-reform?trk=mp-reader-card>
- Digital Disruption Seen through 100's of Audits & Reviews.  
<https://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20140428161740-28199609-what-do-100-s-of-audits-reviews-inquiries-media-reports-over-the-past-decade-have-in-common?trk=mp-reader-card>
- Not Even a Federal Budget Can Stop Digital Disruption  
<https://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20140521000719-28199609-not-even-a-federal-budget-can-stop-digital-disruption?trk=mp-reader-card>

By Craig Thomler at 4:19 PM

Tags: [conference](#), [customer service](#), [gov2au](#), [GovInnovate](#), [policy](#)

1 comment:

**Alex Roberts** [September 15, 2014 at 12:07 PM](#)

Thanks Craig - some great stuff there.

[Reply](#).

Enter your comment...

Comment as: **Google Accour**

Publish
Preview

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

SHARE