Digital Maturity Gap in Education

22nd September 2025 - 12:00 - 16:00

In-person workshops @techUK

Context and Opportunity

There is much to celebrate in the renewed momentum for Edtech in the UK. A range of initiatives, including the Government's Digital, AI and Technology Task and Finish Group, Oak National Academy's AI tool Aila, the EdTech Testbed Programme, the AI Content Store, and the Edtech Hubs from Edtech UK and LGfL, all highlight the importance of technology in Education.

These build on earlier professional development initiatives and aim to support schools in the adoption and effective use of digital tools to improve outcomes for pupils and reduce workload for teachers. To realise the full potential of this investment, the sector must overcome persistent challenges around procurement, workforce professional development, and the sharing of effective practice. Strengthening leadership and teacher confidence in digital adoption is key to embedding technology purposefully into everyday teaching and learning.

The Challenge

England's decentralised education system encourages innovation but results in fragmented adoption and use of tech and EdTech. Procurement is typically handled at individual school or trust level, limiting economies of scale and leading to unrealised savings. Smaller schools are particularly disadvantaged, facing difficulties in navigating procurement without in-house expertise.

While good practice exists, it remains siloed and slow to spread. Digital maturity varies widely across school phases and regions. In contrast, national platforms in Scotland (Glow), Wales (Hwb), and Northern Ireland (C2K) are 'lighthouse' projects supporting communities of practice that enable more consistent use of digital tools through centralised access, procurement support, and co-ordinated training.

Digital maturity in education goes beyond tools and platforms. It requires investment in skills for educators, staff and pupils, clear procurement processes, and strong infrastructure so that schools have reliable access to devices, connectivity, and technical support.

It must also be shaped by digital inclusion and sustainability, reducing inequalities while addressing environmental and financial impact. Progress depends on system-wide collaboration, with schools, trusts, government, and partners aligning efforts and sharing learning to build scalable, sustainable models.

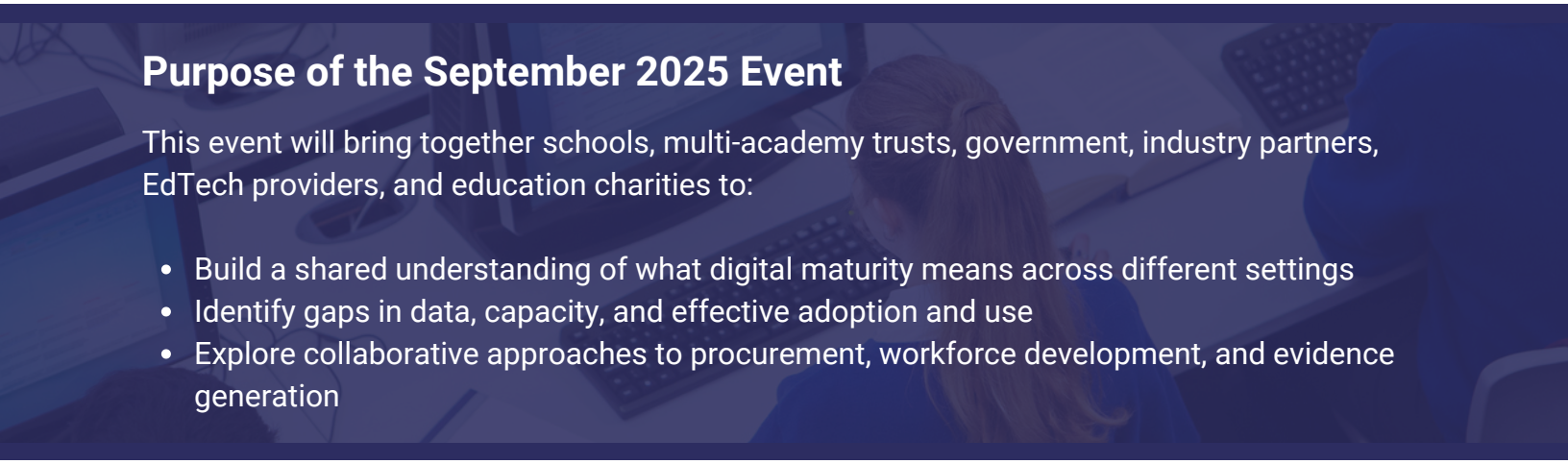
Defining Digital Maturity

Digital maturity in education describes the extent to which a school or trust has the culture, capability, infrastructure and funding to use technology confidently, consistently and purposefully. It covers:

- Leadership and culture, where senior leaders understand how digital supports teaching, learning and school improvement.
- Staff capability, where teachers and support staff have the skills and confidence to use technology effectively.
- Infrastructure and security, where schools have reliable access to devices, connectivity and technical support.
- Finance and procurement, where investment is planned, sustainable and aligned to outcomes.

What is the Digital Maturity Gap?

The digital maturity gap is the unevenness in how these conditions are met across schools and regions. Some schools are highly mature, embedding digital tools into daily practice, while others struggle with limited resources, confidence or guidance. This gap creates inequality in pupil experience, missed opportunities for efficiency, and barriers to scaling good practice.



Purpose of the September 2025 Event

This event will bring together schools, multi-academy trusts, government, industry partners, EdTech providers, and education charities to:

- Build a shared understanding of what digital maturity means across different settings
- Identify gaps in data, capacity, and effective adoption and use
- Explore collaborative approaches to procurement, workforce development, and evidence generation

Expected Outcomes

The event will facilitate a shared roadmap for assessing and improving digital maturity, alongside recommendations for stronger alignment between sector needs and government and/or industry initiatives. It will also explore collaborative models to support procurement, data sharing, and the spread of good practice. In the longer term, the workshop will contribute to the national vision for EdTech and digital inclusion, with consideration of a standing catalyst group to maintain momentum, shape shared priorities, and bridge gaps between policy and practice, ensuring that all schools, regardless of size or location, benefit from the next phase of digital investment through consistent use and purposeful adoption of technology.

Workshop Agenda: Digital Maturity in Education

12:00–16:00 | In-person Workshop

12:00–12:30 | Arrival, Lunch, Networking
Participants arrive, register, and have lunch together. Informal time to connect and meet colleagues from across schools, trusts, government, and industry

12:30–13:00 | Opening and Scene Setting
Facilitators welcome participants and outline the purpose of the afternoon. Explanation of the process, what each phase will involve, and how outputs will be captured. Introduction of the Key Concern Card: Every participant has one card to highlight an issue, evidence gap, or solution that they believe must be heard, even if their table does not prioritise it.

13:00–13:45 | Phase 1: Identify Challenges

We invite each participant to consider:

"What are the barriers or gaps that prevent schools and trusts from becoming digitally mature, and why do these challenges persist?"

- Individual reflection: each participant writes down one or two perceived barriers or gaps to digital maturity on sticky notes.
- Group sharing: participants share notes, briefly explaining the issues identified.
- Root cause exploration using the "5 Whys": tables select one or two issues and apply the "5 Whys" technique. For each issue, ask "Why does this happen?" repeatedly, up to five times, to move beyond surface symptoms and uncover underlying causes.
- Cluster and prioritise: tables group similar issues together, noting where surface challenges share the same root cause. Each table nominates two or three top challenges.
- Key Concern Card (throughout): any participant may place their card directly onto the central board if they feel a topic must be recorded, even if their table does not prioritise it.
- Collective picture: facilitator gathers and displays all nominated challenges and key concern cards, clustering them to create a live picture of the main barriers and root causes.

13:45–14:30 | Phase 2: Define Evidence Needs

- Tables explore what data, examples, or evidence would help clarify the challenges.
- Groups agree on their main evidence gaps.
- Facilitators cluster and display outputs for all to see.

14:30–14:40 | Break

14:40–15:25 | Phase 3: Brainstorm Solutions

- Groups brainstorm practical solutions, considering school, trust, and system levels.
- Tables refine their proposals into a shortlist of feasible ideas.

15:25–16:00 | Phase 4: Prioritise Actions and Plenary

- All solutions (including Key Concern Cards) are displayed.
- Participants use dot voting to highlight the most impactful and achievable ideas.
- Facilitator leads plenary reflection, acknowledging Key Concern Cards and testing whether any require further exploration despite limited votes.
- Agreement on next steps and potential formation of a standing group to sustain progress.

Joining Instructions for Attendees

Event: Digital Maturity Gap in Education
Date: 22nd September 2025
Time: 12:00 - 16:00

Location

- The event will be held at the techUK Offices, 10 St Bride Street, London, EC4A 4AD.
- techUK is located on the 2nd floor of the building accessible by lifts and stairs.
- Closest walkable stations are City Thameslink and Blackfriars.
- Please feel free to use the hyperlinked map to plan your journey.

Event Website

Who is techUK?

techUK is the UK's technology trade association, representing over one-thousand organisations from across the digital economy. Its members range from start-ups to global firms, all working to show how digital innovation can improve lives, strengthen public services and support growth.

The Education and EdTech programme provides a platform for schools, colleges, universities, technology providers and policymakers to work together. It promotes purposeful adoption of technology to support teaching, learning and administration, while also helping institutions build secure digital foundations and confidence in the use of new tools.

The programme is guided by the Education and EdTech Council, which sets its strategic direction and ensures long-term impact. The Council's work is structured around four programme pillars: "*Education 2030 Tech Foundations*" in schools, higher education and further education respectively, alongside "*EdTech 2030 Emerging Modalities*", which explores innovative approaches to learning.

Supporting these pillars are dedicated working groups that bring together members with sector expertise. Through its Council, pillars and working groups, techUK enables collaboration, evidence-sharing and policy engagement, helping to strengthen the UK's EdTech ecosystem and ensure that technology serves learners and educators across the system.

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