Note of 1st meeting of the Information Economy Council

Wednesday 27 March 2013, 1 Victoria Street

Participants

See attached.

Main discussion points

Major trends in the sector

1. The co-chairs outlined the importance of the information economy and the strong UK position in terms of the development and use of technology and being the world leader in e-commerce.

Education and skills

2. A number of points were discussed around the supply and demand for digital skills. It was recognised there were multiple skills requirements from across all business sectors, not just the ICT sector. It was important to segment skills and identify big trends and UK strengths. Suggestions were made for an over-arching integrated digital skills strategy and an initiative to define the current and future digital skills need. On the supply side, concerns were raised over how the negative image of the sector adversely influenced subject choice at school level, in particular for girls. It was noted that children need to be engaged at primary school to get them interested and excited about ICT; this in turn created a challenge in building capability in primary school teachers. There was also concern with how computer science was taught at degree level and that courses were detached from industry needs. The ongoing reform of ICT learning within the national curriculum in England was noted and it was suggested a similar re-think should be undertaken within higher education. Kite marking and accreditation devised in partnership with local employers could help.

The role of public procurement in setting standards and driving innovation

3. The Government's G-Cloud initiative was seen as a positive development in the procurement of digital services. It was important to learn from its successes. Public procurement needed consistency of approach and rules and to promote open standards. Government procurement also has a role in promoting growth through use of open standards.

SME growth and equity investment

4. A further issue discussed was the tendency for UK tech start ups not to grow into mid-sized or large companies with the plan often being to sell out at particular point or and for investors invest to exit. Other factors included risk appetite amongst investors. Some suggested there needed to be a different mind set and in particular patient, long term investment.

<u>R&D</u>

5. It was highlighted that support was available for doctoral training through the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (sometimes known as Doctoral Training Centres - DTCs). This involves cohorts of students tacking specific areas of research with industry engagement. The Council could provide a steer to the EPSRC on future priorities. *Action: EPSRC to send information to Council members.*

<u>Metrics and data</u>

6. There were calls for better metrics on the information economy. Need to set out what success would look like and measure how UK compares with the best in the world - including: benchmarking UK with leading digital economies; GDP contribution; analysis of flow of students schools, HE and FE; assessing social outcomes; and how to measure the part of the tech and creative economies which were coalescing around developing "creative experiences" (an area where the UK could lead the way). It is also important to measure social benefits of the information economy. It was suggested that a balance scorecard be created.

Next meeting

7. The Council is expected to meet formally up to three times per year. Further meetings are scheduled for 1 July (11:00-12:30) and 9 October (10:00-11:30).

May 2013
Information Economy Council Secretariat

1st meeting of the Information Economy Council

Wednesday 27 March 2013, 1 Victoria Street

List of participants

Name	Organisation
Co-chairs	
1. David Willetts	Minister for Universities and Science
2. Victor Chavez	President of Intellect
Attendees	
3. Christopher North	Amazon.co.uk
4. David Watson	EPSRC
5. Theo Bertram	Google
6. Graham Walker	Go On UK
7. Nick Wainwright	HP Labs
8. Richard Ward	IBM
9. David Gann	Imperial College
10. Neil Ellett	IPL Intelligent Business
11. Michel van der Bel	Microsoft
12. Peter Radcliffe	Monitise
13. Nigel Shadbolt	Open Data Institute
14. Stephen Grinham	Roke Manor Research
15. Robert King	Samsung
16. Phil Dawson	Skyscape Cloud
17. Dido Harding	Talk Talk Group
18. Damien Venkatasamy	Tata Consultancy Services
19. Joanna Shields	Tech City
20. Julian David	Intellect
21. Ken McCallum	BIS - Director, Information Economy Directorate
22. Bev Thomas	BIS – Deputry Director, Higher Education Directorate
23. Paul Hadley	BIS - Deputy Director, Information Economy Strategy
24. Sarah Taylor	DCMS – Deputy Director, Creative Economy, Internet, International
25. Oliver Christian	Private Secretary to David Willetts
26. Matthew Wrelton	Intellect
27. Sarah Whybrow	Intellect
28. Vicki Brown	BIS - Information Economy Strategy team
29. Caroline Rae	Tech City