

2020 and have expected for more than ten years as their daily lives have become integrated with their highly personalised use of technology. I've called out public sector north of the border before for their utter lack of CAN-DO attitude and I do so again.

However, we don't have to look far to see public services fit for the 21st century. We hear continuously about the fantastic work being done in Estonia and Ireland, but also south of the border. After the 2010 General Election, councils across England had no option but to modernise if they were to survive and today there are so many fantastic cases studies of English authorities who invested in technology to save public money, while at the same time: improving citizen services. I'm therefore left asking myself the same question I've been asking since I moved to Scotland in the late 90's: why do our 32 Scottish local authorities and non-departmental public bodies, led by the Scottish Government, think they are so different and why do they continue to spend public money on IT solutions that are rarely ever delivered on time or to budget, when there are fantastic examples of successful public sector IT solutions being delivered elsewhere?

We know too that whilst public sector budgets have been tight across the UK, Scottish Government chose not to cut Scottish local authority budgets as steeply as UK Government chose to cut English local authorities. We also know that either through informed procurement and/or increasingly collaborative procurement, English local authorities have found the resources to deliver transformation programmes with a high return on investment.

It was clear from the Digital Office conference that my frustrations are shared across Scotland. However, it was clear too that there were elected members in the room who prioritise their own very local political agenda. Collaboration is minimal, putting up the usual excuses I've heard a thousand times before, putting Scotland's public services in a straitjacket, doomed to 20th century paper-based processes, while the rest of the world moves on. Government leaders from politicians to council officers and civil servants have got to wake up and modernise if we have any chance of delivering even basic services going forward in a cash & resource strapped world.

In conclusion, I want to quote New York University (B.A.) Alvin Toffler (October 4, 1928 – June 27, 2016); an American writer, futurist, and businessman known for his works discussing modern technologies, including the digital revolution and the communication revolution, with emphasis on their effects on cultures worldwide who said: ***"The illiterate of the 21st century aren't those who can't read or write but those who cannot learn, unlearn and then relearn."*** My fear today is that Scotland's Public Sector is being held back by a lack of vision and leadership from those who should be taking the world's best wee country forward, rather than holding it back!

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