



ukgovcamp

Session: 3

Room: Committee Room 3&4

Session title : Tiny Tools & Good people deserve good tech & Undifferentiated Heavy Lifting

Session leader : (Spencer & Andy & Martyn)

Volunteer to continue conversation after :

Notes taken by : Harry Harrold

Notes

There are already some tools available, and without budget/support they don't get traction. Commercial tools that *do* have substantial investment get the market.

Unboxed ODP and MHCLG funding - planning platform - open source - genuine co-design, however... There are huge barriers to use. Existing suppliers, who have tools that do many things - it's difficult to get point tools used, when systems with larger/wider capabilities exist.

Lasuite - FRA/GER gov open source tools, designed for gov, alternative to large economic ecosystem.

Digital Backbone - UK going to do the same thing, for chat

Gov innovation teams - the barriers are installs, long term support, accessibility, data protection, liability. One team uses a sandbox to prove/explore point tools supported by a 1/2 person teams. Lower the barrier to spinning something up. Maps on to some GDS Local work. Software delivered local to where it's used has less of a problem here.

"Easy access to tools" is an IT department's worst nightmare, because they have to support it, and a procurement department's worst nightmare, because the admin/contractual load can be onerous.

OSS succeeds if there's a strong community - can localgov organise themselves to support a community? Is there a 'tragedy of the commons' here.

Existing products have a support model, and someone accountable for it. Is support the risk for OSS.

Legislation around accessibility, can be a barrier. We can't use Miro because data is stored in Russia. (Check that?)

Support models... as a user, what do I want from a support model? OSS tools with no support model can be supported better than corporate support.

"We have no money, use OSS" - finding that significant proportions of tools used were OSS, so circumstances meant a change was required, a daring change worked.

Procuring a new planning system - it's a 2 year process, or you have to extend your current system - and OSS org might not be able to be bought. No OSS providers is invited to Nr. 10 to have breakfast. Staff using the software and asked to use new software is scary.

And localgov don't like each other... And central gov don't like localgov.

The NHS app. is a success story. I could use that to vet my staff.

De-risking is just where the buck stops.

Shadow tech is the IT depts. worst nightmare. Good ideas come from folk who use the service. If you can empower those people, you break the cycle.

"Try before the you buy" is more of a possibility with OSS? Creating an ecosystem where this can happen?

What if the folk who support OSS go away... That happens in commercial companies too, right?

Digital Sovereign Fund is worth a look for that, maybe?

The cost of making software is plummeting. Where is the tipping point where wDJe'll just hire in-house devs?

Does OSS always have to replace - can it enhance?

The economics of software is not well understood.

In planning, breaking a regulatory platform down into small tools hasn't yet got traction. There maybe more licenses, but you won't be stuck in a cycle where you have to replace a large platform. Modularity has its own cost, however.

(Go read Platformland by Richard Pope. Someone had their copy with them.)

Then followed a discussion of outsourcing vis in-house development.

Do we actually train folk to use the IT we have? If they were more literate, maybe they'd be able to use tools rather than a platform.

So IT literacy is the enabler.

But...

"If software needs training - it must be crap." ...because it's not been built to be easy to use.