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Tracking Digital Impact – Key Questions Reference

This is a quick reference summary of the 'Key Questions' developed as part of the large Tracking Digital Impact (TDI) Tool. Users with experience of digital technologies or have previously completed the TDI tool may find this a useful reference when re-assessing or completing new assessments.

Download the TDI tool at <http://emps.exeter.ac.uk/impact>

First Steps

Auditing Skills, Resources and Staff Development Needs

Undertake an audit of all the people who are working on the project / in the group; what kind of media are they comfortable with? Online resources include Netskill's BCE professional development tool (<https://www.netskills.ac.uk/bcecpd2/>). In addition to identifying the skills (and lack thereof) available, an audit of available resources should be undertaken.

Starting Out – Things like 'Usernames' and 'Profiles'

A key component of any digital engagement is establishing a clear and uniform profile for the researchers, project(s), group(s) and institution. Before engaging ensure all the profiles are established on all the different websites and services that are going to be used. Most websites and online services provide profiles.

Tools, Technologies and Services

Identify which tools and services the project will use. Set up all the tools before starting so that you can use the same username across the whole project. Many tools can be linked (like Facebook and Twitter) which can be beneficial to providing a "uniform" profile across multiple services.

Internal Management of Plans & Policies

When developing plans of any kind, and especially those which involve teams of people, it is important to remember to document, share and review the plans regularly. A good strategy will do the following: **record** plans; **share** plans; **review** plans.

Legal Issues

This document does not provide any specific legal advice. There are a number of legal issues that should be considered, such as copyright, data protection and privacy laws.

Key Questions

[Q1] **(Why?)** What is the purpose of the engagement?

Before deciding which form of digital engagement to use, consider what the ultimate goal of the engagement is.

[Q2] **(Who?)** Who are the target participants and/or audience?

Before embarking on establishing an online forum, social media presence or website it is important to establish whether the target user is likely to engage with that type of communication.

- [Q3] **(What?)** What change is the engagement designed to support?
The type of desired change is important in shaping how the engagement is organised.
- [Q4] **(Where?)** Where does the engagement involve digital media or communications?
Digital engagement occurs in many forms, including interacting through digital media like YouTube and more traditional forms of communication like e-mail.
- [Q5] **(How?)** What kinds of engagement is the project using and what ways are they relevant to the project aims?
Before deciding how to monitor and evaluate any engagement, it is important to identify how the engagement will take place and what approaches are best suited to achieving the aims laid out in the project plan.
- [Q6] **(Resources!)** Who should be undertaking which particular tasks and what skills do they need?
It is important to identify who should be responsible for each aspect of the strategy to ensure they take ownership of their own activities.
- [Q7] **(Track!)** Can the digital media or communication be tracked?
Not all digital media or communications can be easily tracked. For example, once a software application has been distributed it may not be possible to monitor where it is installed and how it is used.
- [Q8] **(So?)** What evidence will support a case for successful engagement or impact?
A vast amount of data can be collected on many forms of digital engagement. However, not all the data is useful.
- [Q9] **(Quantitative vs. Qualitative)** How best can you support and evidence your case for engagement or impact?
When building a case study and/or planning your monitoring and evidence gathering strategy it is important to collect both data (numbers) and contextual information.
- [Q10] **(Interested?)** How should I present the data to best support the case for engagement / impact?
Data is often very difficult to understand in its original, "raw" form. It is important to understand how the data can be interpreted and presented – some data is better suited to different forms of presentation than others.
- [Q11] **(Can you say that again?)** What data should be stored and/or made available to others?
It is now expected that research, research data and research outputs are made available in an open and permanent way for all to access.