



Digital islands

A New Zealand perspective on government and
society in the information age

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New Zealand

- The New Zealand context
 - Similarities and differences
 - Digital Strategy
 - Local Government Act 2002
- eDemocracy practice in New Zealand
 - eParticipation project
- Emergent local eDemocracy
- Lessons learned

eDemocracy in New Zealand

- Leadership in ICT policy.
- But limited examples of eDemocracy.
- Partially related to more effective non-digital engagement strategies.
- Discussion points
 - State Services Commission eParticipation guide
 - Local Government New Zealand
 - Families Commission: The Couch
 - Aotearoa Ethnic Network

Emergent local eDemocracy

- Catalysts
 - Local Government Act 2002
 - Citizens
 - Internal influencers
- Barriers
 - Gatekeepers
 - Lack of knowledge
 - Inherent risk aversion

Emergent local eDemocracy

- Local citizen-centric eDemocracy becomes possible when:
 - Barriers to access are reduced.
 - New processes are valued.
 - Citizens control their own processes.
- Critical Success Factors
 - Partnerships
 - Grounded leadership

Grounded leadership

- Both horizontal and vertical
- Work effectively with communities
- Leadership and advocacy within local government.
- Bridge and link different stakeholder groups.
- Promoting common standards.
- Engage people with ICT.

Conclusion

- eDemocracy widens the options for how democracy occurs
- Requires clear and strong leadership from both council and community
- When entrenched values become insurmountable and projects fail.
- eDemocracy will not engage citizens if it is left as the domain of governments and their technocratic partners.

A pair of weathered, brown hands is shown from a top-down perspective, cupping a small, vibrant green seedling with four leaves. The seedling is growing out of a mound of dark, rich soil. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly more soil or a dark fabric, which makes the hands and the plant stand out. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the skin and the freshness of the plant.

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