



# CREATING A DIGITAL DIALOGUE

How can the National Assembly for Wales use digital to  
build useful and meaningful citizen engagement?

Digital  
News and Information  
Taskforce



**The objective of the Taskforce was to explore and recommend the most effective ways in which the Assembly can deliver engaging and accessible news and information about its work in order to increase levels of public understanding and engagement with audiences currently disengaged with politics and Welsh affairs.**

# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Foreword by Chair .....	6
Background .....	9
Remit.....	11
Membership .....	12
Recommendations.....	14
Summary .....	20
<b>SECTION 1: CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>31</b>
The Welsh Media Market Since 1999 .....	32
The Digital Eco-system in Wales.....	40
Other Parliaments.....	42
National Assembly for Wales – Content Creation.....	44
<b>SECTION 2: DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>47</b>
The Assembly as a Content Platform.....	49
Telling the National Assembly’s Stories.....	50
Platforms .....	57
Specialist Audiences.....	64
Digital and Data Leadership in the Assembly .....	80
Staying Ahead.....	91
<b>ANNEXES.....</b>	<b>93</b>
Annex 1: Meetings and Discussions Held..	94
Annex 2: Membership .....	96
Annex 3: Senedd Lab Overview .....	98
Annex 4: Case Studies .....	104
Annex 5: Wales-based Media Survey .....	115

# INTRODUCTION



## FOREWORD BY CHAIR

Twenty years ago this September the people of Wales voted in favour of having their own National Assembly. It's the only political organisation the people of Wales have ever voted to have. This is an appropriate moment to consider how the National Assembly can better engage with people across Wales. In this report we set out how the National Assembly can use modern digital communication and social media channels to identify what people are thinking and concerned about, to collect evidence, information and opinion, to engage in real-time with people in local communities and

communities of interest, and to share with them directly how their elected representatives, individually and collectively, are seeking to respond to those issues.

Our proposals in some areas are radical. We want the Assembly, its Members and staff, to understand that they are content creators: the Assembly is a content platform which captures facts, information, data, commentary, opinion, and analysis, both written and audiovisual, that leads – or sometimes consciously doesn't lead – to action. Properly

organised, this is a profound, valuable and democratic digital space which reflects the nation's conversations about the issues which are of most concern to it. It should be innovative, creative, and inspirational. Our group contained people with a diverse range of relevant skills, which has enabled us to make practical proposals for improving the Assembly's operations.

Our focus has been on the Welsh citizen – the potential user of the Assembly platform and services. Our starting point is that all Assembly communications should be designed with a citizen/user interest at their heart, with a presumption of open data, seeking to build long-term relationships with the citizens of Wales.

In voting for a National Assembly twenty years ago, the people of Wales created a new democratic organisation operating, it is fair to say, in a fragmented public sphere. Though the National Assembly was born at the time of digital developments in our media, in practice we built a new Welsh public polity in the absence of a coherent Welsh public sphere. It was not our job as a group to consider the Welsh media and its structural challenges – committees of the Assembly have been looking at those themselves. Our task was to help the National Assembly establish how best to build a deep, genuine and continuous dialogue with the people of Wales. This is our report. Let the debates begin!

**Leighton Andrews, Chair**



**People are now consuming information and news about politics in different and innovative ways, mainly through digital platforms.**

## BACKGROUND

The Llywydd of the National Assembly for Wales has an ambition for the Assembly to become an open, digital parliament that sets the benchmark for other legislatures. This is reflected in the strategic goal, to engage with all the people of Wales and champion the Assembly set by the Assembly Commission, for the Fifth Assembly 2016 – 2021.

Considerable progress was made in the previous Assembly, to engage external groups and individuals directly and strategically in its work, but we are conscious that there is much that still needs to be done.

People are now consuming information and news about politics in different and innovative ways, mainly through digital platforms. Despite publishing news content to the main Assembly website and on Senedd TV, the footprint for our news coverage is still relatively small and isn't shared widely online. As a result, awareness of the work and responsibilities of the Assembly is low, whilst interest in the subject areas that the Assembly is responsible for is high.

To help address this, the Assembly Commission decided to re-examine how the Assembly presents itself to the people of Wales, how the work of the Assembly is explained and demonstrate how the Assembly enables people to interact and engage with the organisation.

Specifically, the Assembly Commission wanted to review the way that the Assembly produces its content and tells stories. It also wanted to understand how new technologies, social media and online platforms can be exploited to inform, and engage with, the public and other stakeholders, and to make strides in this area comparative to other parliaments and pioneering public service organisations.

To aid this, the Llywydd established a small, expert Taskforce to provide advice about the best techniques and opportunities to optimise engagement between the people of Wales and their Assembly.



## REMIT

---

The remit of the Taskforce was to explore and recommend the most effective ways in which the Assembly can deliver engaging and accessible news and information about its work in order to increase levels of public understanding and engagement with audiences currently disengaged with politics and Welsh affairs.

In doing so, the Taskforce was asked to:

- consider how digital services can help the Assembly meet the needs of different audiences and customers;
- provide an external, expert critique of our current and planned future use of platforms such as Senedd TV and use of video and social media;
- consider trends in content creation, production and distribution and their suitability to the Assembly's public engagement ambitions.

# MEMBERSHIP

---



Leighton Andrews  
(Chair)



Valerie Livingston



Hannah Mathias



Emma Meese



Cath Allen



James Downes



Ifan Morgan Jones



Gareth Rees



Iain Tweedale



Andy Williamson



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## THE ASSEMBLY AS A CONTENT PLATFORM

- 1 The Assembly should lead the way and establish an integrated content service using social media and other channels (such as dedicated email newsletters) to engage directly with the people of Wales.
- 2 The Assembly should put people - rather than the organisation and its processes - at the heart of topical news stories and aim for an emotional connection with the public it serves.
- 3 The Assembly should create content that helps people understand the connections, differences and working relationships between the Assembly and other key organisations in Welsh public life to address the democratic information deficit.
- 4 The Assembly should distinguish between its internal and external audiences. It should use popular language to connect with people better.
- 5 The Assembly should organise its online platforms - the website, Senedd TV and social media channels - around user needs and deliver some of the quick wins stakeholders identified during our discussions. The Assembly must develop an evaluation framework to measure how its content is consumed.
- 6 Senedd TV must be more user-friendly, with a simple tool allowing anyone to quickly find and clip footage which can be included in video packages or embedded on Assembly Member pages, external websites and social media platforms.
- 7 The structure of the Assembly's social media channels should be reviewed. Smart social media analytics should be adopted to identify online conversations and communities, and allow the Assembly to become involved in these discussions.
- 8 The Assembly must exploit every alternative to the press release as a means of promoting its work. Maps, infographics, blogs and neat summaries all have the potential to articulate difficult messaging in a memorable way.
- 9 There needs to be a proper forward planning, editorial and scheduling process for the production of committee reports. Authority needs to be asserted over this process directly by the Llywydd and her team to rule on publication decisions for committee reports in line with the overall communications strategy of the National Assembly.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## SPECIALIST AUDIENCES

- 10** A dedicated, easy to use National Assembly for Wales area should be established on the Hwb platform with resources for teaching that are mapped to the needs of the new curriculum currently being developed.
- 11** The Assembly should establish strong contacts with Welsh Higher and Further Education Institutions to facilitate easier engagement with the Assembly and explore the potential of developing a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) about its work.
- 12** Social media platforms best suited to engage with young people and learners should be adopted. The Assembly should embrace the potential for digital engagement utilising other platforms such as Skype, Facetime, Virtual Reality or Augmented Reality.

- 13** Student-produced materials for promoting the Assembly to the wider public such as mini-films should be supported and encouraged by the Assembly.
- 14** The Assembly should explore how civil society organisations communicate digitally with their publics and work with them to provide edited Assembly content suitable for their own communications platforms.

## VISITOR ENGAGEMENT

- 15** Further thought should be given to the visitor experience on the Assembly estate - both inside and outside the Senedd and Pierhead - including use of projection, video walls, Virtual and Augmented Reality.
- 16** Every contact point within and beyond the Senedd and the Pierhead should be considered in terms of not simply the immediate engagement that is taking place but as a basis for long term repeat engagement and trust building.

- 17** Each contact with the public must be captured effectively if the Assembly is to maintain a healthy dialogue with the public it serves. For this purpose, the Assembly should prioritise the development of a customer relationship strategy and acquire a simple off-the-shelf system to resolve the immediate need.
- 18** We recommend that the twentieth anniversary since the Assembly's establishment in May 2019 is at the heart of a campaign to promote the stories of devolution, and recommend to the Llywydd that she consider organising a Festival of Welsh Democracy to coincide with that anniversary.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## DATA LEADERSHIP

- 19** We were pleased to learn that the Assembly has already started to look at an Open Data strategy and would recommend that it makes significant, visual changes to demonstrate its commitment. We recommend that the Assembly engages with specialists in the field to shape its strategy.
- 20** The Assembly should establish an Open Data team to deliver the strategy and develop a promotional plan targeting likely users to drive awareness of the Assembly's approach.

## CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

- 21** User needs should be at the heart of new service design. We support the approach adopted by the MySenedd programme of placing the end user needs firmly at the heart of service design rather than being led by the organisation.
- 22** The Assembly must develop a culture where people feel both able and empowered to try new approaches to delivering digital services without fearing the consequences of this not going exactly to plan. Creating such an environment relies on people knowing they can fail fast and fail safely. This is preferable to failing after months of expensive work undertaken behind closed doors.
- 23** The Assembly needs to ensure digital becomes built in to all Assembly processes and develop an understanding that digital is not just about technology – it is a way of thinking and working.

## RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 24** All Assembly staff should consider themselves as content producers. Anything published for public consumption – from the date and time of Plenary meetings, press releases, tweets communicating Senedd opening times, committee reports, legislation flowcharts and business forward work programmes – must be communicated with the external audience in mind.
- 25** We believe that the Assembly must put in place a mandatory, ongoing training programme to help everyone in the organisation deliver successful digital communication.
- 26** We recommend that the Assembly puts in place a senior position to drive the digital agenda. Day-to-day operations, communications and technology should be brought together to bring digital to the heart of the Assembly's operational strategy.
- 27** The recommendations in our report should be kept under active review and there should be a specific lead Assembly Commissioner responsible for driving these forward.

# SUMMARY

---

## BACKGROUND

- Since the National Assembly for Wales opened its doors in 1999 the way that people find and consume information has changed dramatically. The rise of social media channels provides a more direct forum for engagement. It also gives members of the public their own audience. Smartphone ownership and access to the internet through a mobile device is widespread. The representation of Wales across UK news networks is in decline as is the circulation of Wales-based newspapers with people opting to get their news through much more diverse routes. As a result, Wales and the Assembly need new solutions to guarantee national conversation.
- Wales has a strong and vibrant digital eco-system containing plenty of examples of best practice that the Assembly can learn from. The Assembly needs to be more outward looking, not just when it comes to learning and understanding the latest digital practices but also when it comes to discovering national conversations and understanding how the Assembly can become a part of them.
- More and more parliaments around the world are using digital tools to consult and engage with citizens and there has been a sharp rise in the number of parliaments offering open data as well as open documents for the public to use.

## THE ASSEMBLY AS A CONTENT PLATFORM

- The Assembly produces a substantial amount of information in a variety of formats on a daily basis. Much of this is available publicly – however, it is difficult to find and understand. More positively, a number of the Assembly’s recent creative initiatives have been comparable with national media organisations, in particular the tone of voice adopted on some social media channels and the quality of graphics, animation and video to broadcast key messages. However much more could be done to maximise the impact of what is a tremendously content-rich organisation in pursuit of its goal of engaging with all of the people of Wales.
- The Assembly itself should be reimaged as a content platform. This establishes a new mind-set focussed on how the Assembly can reach audiences directly. Such a shift will mean the Assembly putting more emphasis on content distribution. Content should be packaged so that it can be pushed directly to platforms that audiences are already consuming, rather than expecting the audience to come to the Assembly’s own platforms. This change in approach would also result in useful materials being produced for Welsh local and hyperlocal news publications, particularly those that require content packaged for digital platforms.





## SUMMARY

---

### PUTTING THE USER FIRST

- The Assembly has a significant digital estate, with much excellent practice, but some aspects have struggled to deliver a complete user experience. All Assembly communications and digital services have to be designed with the end user at their heart. The Assembly exists to represent the people of Wales so the impact on them or their community should be at the heart of explanations of Assembly business, structures or policy-making.
- The Assembly needs to put people, rather than the institution and its processes, at the heart of everything it does. As the bedrock of a healthy Welsh democracy the Assembly must think about the practical effect all its debates, decisions and actions have on the people it represents and learn to communicate its work from their perspective.

## SUMMARY

---

### CATERING FOR DIFFERENT AUDIENCES

- From the outset, the Assembly has invested in a significant education programme with outreach to schools in Wales. We are passionate supporters of the Commission's plans to establish a Welsh Youth Parliament which will build on what is already a successful Education and Youth Engagement programme. Feedback from teachers shows there is an appetite and enthusiasm from the education sector for inspiring Assembly content that is clearly linked to the curriculum, grounded in real life experiences and with stories told by young people themselves.
- The Assembly has been world leading in its community outreach work, but if it wants to build awareness, trust and promote its relevance to the people of Wales then it is time for a step change in the quality of its digital outreach. Partnerships with a wide variety of external organisations and individuals need to be improved to increase advocacy, disseminate content and feed information back.
- The Assembly's physical estate - which includes the Senedd and Pierhead - has received over 188,000 visitors since the May 2016 election. These iconic buildings are, however, considerably underutilised. Every opportunity to use these buildings as platforms to tell the Assembly's story needs to be maximised. People's engagement with institutions is a blend of both digital and physical experience, so the overall offering must be given careful consideration rather than approaching interactions in isolation.
- Across all of its channels the Assembly engages with tens of thousands of people on an annual basis. However, the Assembly currently doesn't have an organisation-wide customer relationship management strategy or system in place. Each contact must be captured effectively so that the Assembly can build long term relationships and maintain a healthy dialogue with the public it serves. This means providing ample and accessible opportunities for the public to provide their data which then needs to be managed safely and used for meaningful contact.



# SUMMARY

---

## CULTURAL CHANGE AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- The twentieth anniversary of its establishment presents the Assembly with a good opportunity to refresh the way it presents itself, tells its stories and to demonstrate that it is an innovative, forward looking parliament.
- There are pockets of good practice within the Assembly. For example the MySenedd programme aims to make Assembly information more accessible, relevant, easier to find, understand, share and re-use through a series of ongoing, practical improvements to digital services and is doing brilliant work leading the way for the rest of the organisation when it comes to adopting an agile project management approach. However when it comes to staying on top of the ever changing world of digital and technological trends and best practice developments the Assembly as a whole has to learn to be more nimble. The culture of the Assembly needs to change to ensure that innovation and progress aren't stifled by process, procedure and administration.
- New leaders in digital content and news management should be recruited and given the space and time to plan the Assembly's news and promotional work effectively. They should also be afforded the freedom and trust to prioritise editorial content according to organisational objectives.
- Delivering engaging digital communications on behalf of the Assembly is not solely the responsibility of the Assembly's Digital and Media team. Internal partners, including committee clerks, researchers, the visitor, education and outreach teams, must all play their part in this process.



# SUMMARY

---

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

- In summary, this is not a one-off programme of work. The digital landscape will continue to evolve at a rapid pace and the Assembly's audiences will adopt new news channels and platforms. The Assembly needs to embrace this and develop a digital culture with the right attitude and skillset to adapt to constant change and continually refresh its provision.



# SECTION 1: CONTEXT

# THE WELSH MEDIA MARKET SINCE 1999

---

The National Assembly for Wales opened its doors at the start of the digital television revolution.

In 1999, it was common to speak of the ‘devolution dividend’ that Welsh media organisations had gained, including significant new resources and staffing for political coverage. This was particularly true for the broadcasters, who additionally invested in new transmitters to ensure effective coverage of Welsh affairs across the whole of Wales. The ambition then, as Geraint Talfan Davies, the Controller of BBC Cymru Wales at the time, wrote, was to see ‘the new institution and the new processes becoming an inextricable part of our conscious and sub-conscious daily narrative.’<sup>1</sup>

Since then, a number of things have changed. Just over a decade ago the National Assembly moved out of its makeshift chamber in Crickhowell House (as it was then called) to the Senedd building, with purpose-built chamber and committee rooms.

A glass-sided building, the Senedd was intended to symbolise the openness and transparency of the young organisation. It has since become one of the most visited buildings in Wales, with a regular flow of public and educational visits.

In recent years, social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter have increasingly provided direct forums for contact between Assembly Members and the Assembly as an organisation, with the wider public and civic society organisations. With the advent of the smartphone ten years ago, there has been a significant shift in the way people receive and consume their news and information.

Ofcom figures for 2016<sup>2</sup> showed Welsh viewers and listeners still spend more of their time watching television and listening to radio than others in the UK. The ownership of tablet devices was higher in Wales (67%) than elsewhere in the UK (59%), and a higher proportion of Welsh citizens (25%) said that their tablet device was their most important resource for going online compared to the UK average (20%). Nine out of ten adults had mobile phones, and while smartphone ownership in Wales was lower (65%) than the UK as a whole (71%), 36% said that the smartphone was their most important device for going online:

“With the exception of internet users aged over 55, and those living in rural areas, the smartphone was considered to be the most important device for internet access across all demographics. For example, 58% of 16-34s considered the smartphone to be the most important device, compared to 7% of over-55s. More than a third (34%) of ABC1s considered the smartphone to be their most important device; this rose to just under a half (47%) of internet users in C1DE households.

57% of Welsh people accessed the internet via mobile phone weekly. 43% communicated through social media platforms such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger, compared to 24% in 2014. 30% used the internet to access news services weekly.

International research by the Reuters’ Institute<sup>3</sup> in 2016 showed:

“The biggest change in digital media has been the growth of news accessed via social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat.

<sup>2</sup> Ofcom, *The Communications Market: Wales*, August 2016:


[https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/34831/CMR\\_Wales\\_2016.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/34831/CMR_Wales_2016.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Reuters’ Institute for the Study of Journalism, *Reuters’ Institute Digital News Report*, 2016:

<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Digital-News-Report-2016.pdf>

<sup>1</sup> Geraint Talfan Davies, *Not by Bread Alone*, Wales Media Forum, 1999





While these figures are likely to continue to grow, television remains the most powerful communication medium for news in Wales. BBC One and ITV's early evening local news bulletins attract a greater share in Wales compared to the UK average for the same weekday slot:

“Wales Today, BBC One's early evening news bulletin, had an average 30.7% share of TV viewing in Wales between 6.30pm and 7.00pm in 2015, higher than the BBC One UK average for the same time period (29.6%). ITV News at Six, ITV's counterpart bulletin, attracted a lower share than BBC One's Wales Today, although, at 20.1%, it was also higher than the Channel 3 UK average (18.5%).

Ofcom found in 2015 that TV was the main source of news for Welsh citizens:

“In Wales in 2015, nearly six in ten (58%) adults aged 16+ said that the TV was their main source of UK and world news. Websites or apps were used by two in ten adults as a source of news, more than any other nation and the UK as a whole. Use of radio and newspapers for UK and world news was used by a similar proportion of adults in Wales (9% and 8% respectively).

The representation of Wales on UK news networks has been the subject of critical comment by the Assembly's Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, amongst others.<sup>4</sup> Academic research<sup>5</sup> by Cardiff University for the BBC indicated a fall in BBC network coverage of Welsh issues:

<sup>4</sup> Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

'The Big Picture: The Committee's Initial Views on Broadcasting in Wales', February 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, *Four Nations Impartiality Review Follow-up: An Analysis of Reporting Devolution*, 2015:

[http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/review\\_report\\_research/impartiality/2016/cardiff\\_university\\_2015.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/review_report_research/impartiality/2016/cardiff_university_2015.pdf)

“Between 2009 and 2015, news from Wales fell dramatically from 3.4% to 0.5% of news items on BBC television and 6.4% to 3.7% on BBC radio.

However, the same research found that coverage of devolved politics across the UK in 2015 had risen across all media outlets, compared to 2007 and 2009, but that the growth of coverage was principally in terms of the process of politics, rather than policy. A follow up report<sup>6</sup> in 2016 found:

“Although the BBC communicates news about the four nations with greater regularity and clarity than commercial television, overall devolved politics continues to represent a fraction of UK network news.

In the meantime an already fragmented Welsh media has continued to weaken and retrench, with ownership and editorial decisions centralised outside of Wales' borders.<sup>7</sup> Wales' national newspaper, the Western Mail, has seen its circulation fall from above 55,000 in 1999 to 16,754 in 2016.<sup>8</sup> The Daily Post, the Wales-based newspaper with the highest sales figures at 23,645<sup>9</sup>, decided in 2016 to no longer send a reporter to the National Assembly for Wales to cover devolved matters.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, *Nations Impartiality Review: A snapshot picture*, 2016:  
[http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/review\\_report\\_research/impartiality/2016/cardiff\\_university\\_2016.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/review_report_research/impartiality/2016/cardiff_university_2016.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> McElroy et al, *Broadcasting after devolution: policy and critique in the Welsh media landscape 2008-2015*, January 2017

<sup>8</sup> ABC, *The Western Mail Combined Total Circulation Certificate* (average print sales for June 2015-January 2016) published February 2016:  
<http://www.abc.org.uk/Certificates/47760444.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> ABC, *Daily Post Combined Total Circulation Certificate* (average print sales for June 2015-January 2016) published February 2016:  
<https://abc.org.uk/Certificates/47760903.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Thomas, Huw, *Daily Post assembly reporting change 'ludicrous'; NUJ claims*, June 2016:  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-36585967>



A survey conducted in 2016 found that the people of Wales were not regularly exposed to news about the Assembly, with only 4% reading the Western Mail, and 2.5% the Daily Post. In comparison, 16% read the Daily Mail.<sup>11</sup> A 2010 report into how much coverage of devolution was involved in the BBC's UK output found that, excluding news about UK politics at Westminster, only 3.6% of BBC television, radio and online news was geographically relevant to Wales, compared with 4.5% for Northern Ireland, 9.9% for Scotland and 82% for England.<sup>12</sup>

Even when the public did engage with the Welsh media, the Assembly was afforded low prominence in its coverage.<sup>13</sup> Unsurprisingly therefore, and despite being responsible for key policy areas such as education, health and transport, the weak and fragmented nature of the Welsh media means that the nature of the legislature is “neither understood or scrutinised”.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Cushion & Scully, *British media is failing to give voters the full picture ahead of elections*, April 2016: <https://theconversation.com/british-media-is-failing-to-give-voters-the-full-picture-ahead-of-elections-57020>

<sup>12</sup> Cushion, et al., *Four Nations Impartiality Review Follow-up: An analysis of reporting devolution*, 2010

<sup>13</sup> Thomas, et al., *Journal of Public Affairs, Stirring Up Apathy? Political Disengagement and the Media in the 2003 Welsh Assembly Elections*, 2004

<sup>14</sup> Cushion, et al., *Journalism Studies, Reflecting the Four Nations?: An analysis of reporting devolution on UK network news media*, 2009

A survey by the BBC/ICM in 2014 found that there was widespread confusion about what powers were devolved to the National Assembly for Wales, with only 48% correctly identifying that health was a devolved matter, and 42% wrongly believing they had control over policing.<sup>15</sup> The National Assembly for Wales itself has identified this as an issue of concern. In May 2013 the Presiding Officer of the Assembly at the time spoke in stark terms of what she termed the “democratic deficit” in Wales. A lack of a robust Welsh media meant that the population relied on “Anglo-centric” broadcasters and news outlets that reported on England-only issues as though they applied to the whole of the UK. She identified “financial pressures faced by our indigenous Welsh national and regional press” as the main culprit, and spoke of a “danger of sleepwalking towards a media landscape in Wales where there is little or no plurality in the reporting of our political life”.<sup>16</sup> As the Institute of Welsh Affairs’ Media Audit in 2015 put it: “At a time when Wales as a democratic entity has never been more clearly defined, the sources for information for debate and scrutiny about our Government, culture and identity are drying up.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> BBC News, *Fewer than half the population know who runs Welsh NHS, says poll*, June 2014: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-27739205>

<sup>16</sup> Butler, Rosemary, *Democratic Deficit - Presiding Officer welcomes leading media figures to Pierhead in bid to ensure plurality in coverage of Assembly news*, May 2013: <http://www.assembly.wales/en/newhome/Pages/newsitem.aspx?itemid=1109>

<sup>17</sup> The Institute of Welsh Affairs, *IWA Wales Media Audit*, 2015

In this challenging environment, how can the Assembly ensure that it communicates with the people of Wales who want the organisation to reflect and deliver their hopes and aspirations?

Communicating the actions taken by politicians to deliver the Welsh public's ambitions is becoming increasingly difficult and goes largely unnoticed by swathes of the population. Most people get their television and radio news from UK channels which rarely cover Wales and seldom explain where policies in Wales differ from those in England, except in passing. The London-based newspapers, widely read in Wales, scarcely mention Welsh politics or the Assembly. The problem is compounded by the financial and commercial pressures faced by our indigenous Welsh national and regional press, which leaves many unable to resource comprehensive coverage of Assembly news.

There have been some positive developments in terms of news media more recently. After Brexit, the pop-up weekly The New European was intended to last for only a few issues but is still going strong. The Guardian has added 200,000 members on top of its subscription base. In the United States, the Trump candidacy and presidency has been a boost for the circulations of the New York Times and the Washington Post.

In Wales there have also been some local triumphs. Although the Port Talbot Magnet has come and gone, [www.wrexham.com](http://www.wrexham.com) flourishes online as does the Caerphilly Observer, MyNewtown and MyWelshpool - all of which have developed a strong digital presence.

The digital revolution has also been a boon for publicly funded Welsh-language journalism. BBC Cymru Fyw and Golwg 360 attract over 57,000 unique weekly visitors between them. Around half of this audience is below 40 years of age. They have been effective in using social media as a means of attracting a new, and younger, audience that would not traditionally have turned to Welsh-language print publications, TV or radio programmes.

Market and technological pressures will continue to change the shape of the media industry in Wales – political pressure, and public intervention, will also have an impact on its development. The Welsh Government has intervened in the past, for example through funding community radio, digital development for the Papurau Bro and the Welsh language online service Golwg 360, supported at arm's length – as are a range of cultural publications – by grants from the Welsh Books Council.

At the heart of all of these changes is a fundamental shift in media consumption patterns. The last few years have seen audiences finding and consuming digital content in a variety of new and different ways, and this behaviour continues to evolve.

The first phase of the web involved organisations building websites and then attracting audiences through major promotion efforts. The homepages of these sites acted as 'portals' to the content within. The second phase was characterised by audiences looking for content via search engines that took them directly to a specific piece of content without the user having to first go through the homepage or portal for that site, leading to a decreasing importance in content portals.

Traditional news distribution models have not been immune to these changes either. Today, people opt to get their news through much more diverse routes – some now only from Facebook.

Associated with the rise in social media is the new phenomenon that 'the audience has an audience'. In other words, by reaching some users who have large social media followings (social influencers) it is possible to get content to large numbers of people with the audience themselves acting as the content distribution network, this socialisation of content distribution is a powerful medium for persuasion.

Against this evolving backdrop, we must remind ourselves that successive surveys indicate that the vast majority of the Welsh population continue to rely on UK national broadcast and print media for news and political information. Increasingly, or rather as ever, Wales and its polity are conspicuous by their absence from the pages of our broadsheets, tabloids and mainstream news bulletins.

Wales and the Assembly need new solutions to guarantee national conversation. The Assembly should examine whether its own resources are providing copy for publications with a declining audience in Wales and consider how to best manage communications with the Welsh public, both through existing media and in a disintermediated form – in other words, directly to the people of Wales.



# THE DIGITAL ECO-SYSTEM IN WALES

There is a strong and vibrant digital eco-system in Wales. Examples of good practice include:

- UK government agencies and departments such as DVLA, ONS, IPO and Companies House.
- Major private sector data-users including Admiral, Airbus, BT and Gocompare.
- Media organisations like the BBC, S4C, ITV Wales, Media Wales and a growing number of smaller digital news services.
- Innovative start-ups, sometimes housed in incubators such as Welsh ICE, Tramshed Tech, and Indycube.
- Universities, FE colleges, private and civic society organisations such as Satori Lab, Gov Camp Cymru and the Open Data Institute.

**Hwb**

The Welsh Government has published its own Open Data Plan, and has developed award-winning open data projects such as MyLocalSchool, a website designed to provide school performance data for parents and others who may have an interest. Over half a million young people, and all schools in Wales, are connected to the Welsh Government's Hwb platform.

NHS Wales has developed a number of leading digital initiatives.

NHS Wales Informatics (a digital open innovation platform) has led to the development of My Health Online which allows patients to take a greater involvement in their own healthcare via the internet at any time of day, any day of the week, in a similar way to shopping or banking online.

My Health Online gives patients the opportunity to book GP appointments, order repeat prescriptions and update their general details such as change of address all from the convenience of their own computer or device.

As well as being more convenient for patients the system has also benefited surgeries as it saves time on phone calls, links into the patient records directly and cuts down on administrative steps when processing patient's repeat prescriptions.



**WISERD**

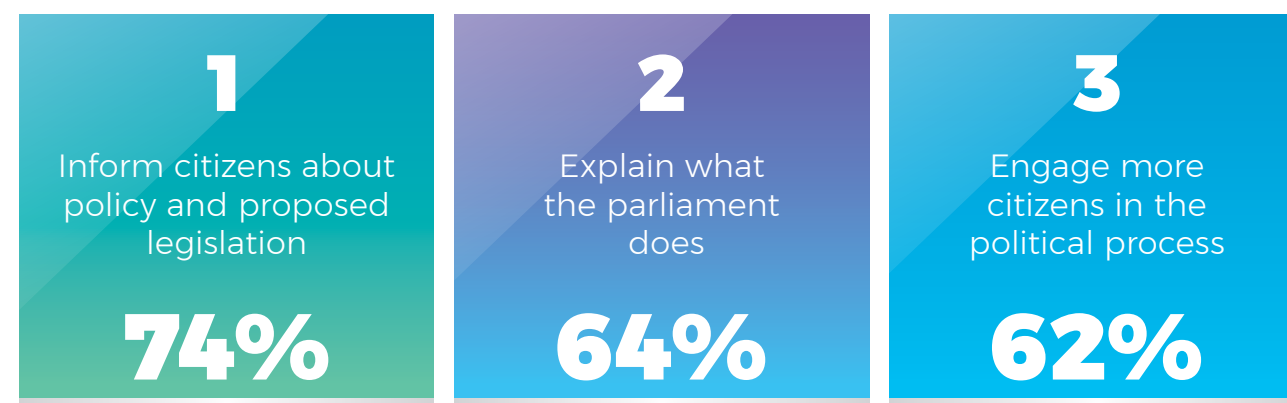
The National Assembly's Research Service has partnered with WISERD - the Wales Institute for Social & Economic Research, Data & Methods - to develop a bespoke interface for the WISERD DataPortal which allows Assembly research staff, Assembly Members and their support staff to access and map a wide range of data for National Assembly for Wales Constituencies and Regions.

## OTHER PARLIAMENTS

The National Assembly has previously commissioned a report on its digital engagement from Dr Andy Williamson. His report concluded that digital media are ideal places for legislatures to connect and engage with people who would not traditionally think about talking to their parliament or making submissions. They offer a chance to engage in a more conversational way, rather than just as another broadcast channel, but this can be challenging for public organisations trying to balance formal procedures with more user-friendly and informal media.

The Assembly has created a significant digital estate and much of this, and the associated practice, is excellent. However, some key aspects of the digital estate have struggled to deliver a complete user experience. The Assembly has enthusiastically embraced new ideas and shown itself to be consistently innovative and open. The Assembly's outbound communication is world class but this is let down by a website with poor search functions, a lack of integration with other digital assets and complex language that too often is oriented towards experienced users, rather than the public. The challenge is heightened by a weak local media and an uninterested UK-wide media.

The latest World e-Parliament Report, also produced by Dr Williamson, shows that more and more parliaments are using digital tools to consult and engage but that they are even more likely to use mainstream social media channels to connect with the public. Social networks such as Facebook are employed by almost three-in-five of all parliaments, an 80% increase since 2012. The report identifies the top three objectives for parliaments when communicating with citizens as:



The European Parliament has developed several Facebook apps that can be used to connect the public directly with their MEPs. Yet this rise in social traffic does not reduce the value of the parliamentary website and social sources can be used to drive traffic to richer and more complex content online.

Social networks and applications such as instant messaging are additional channels, not replacements and we see sophisticated web-based tools being hosted within the web estates of parliaments in Brazil and Chile to directly involve citizens in scrutinising and amending draft laws.

Tools like Twitter and WhatsApp are increasingly being used and Members as well as organisations are rapidly adopting new social platforms. UK Parliament committees make extensive use of these tools to draw in wider participation.

Committees too are increasingly likely to use digital and social tools to connect with citizens. Increasingly this activity is about soliciting input to an inquiry or issue as well as publishing. committees in one-third of parliaments allow online submissions. Effective engagement

must be supported by information and 60% of parliaments think publishing data in an open format, so that others can use, re-use and re-distribute it, will lead to important improvements. There has been a sharp rise in the number of parliaments offering open data as well as open documents for the public to use. The approach to open publishing varies, well-resourced parliaments such as the Italian Senate have created their own extensive repositories whereas others, such as the Czech Republic have worked with digital NGOs to publish their data.





## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES – CONTENT CREATION

Our report proposes changes we think the Assembly should make to the look and feel of its digital and information content.

By content, we mean any material that is produced by the Assembly as a whole – this includes reports, research, evidence, records of Assembly proceedings, the calendar, Senedd TV, archive and other footage. The National Assembly, its Members, its committees, the Research Service, Assembly Commission staff and Assembly Member Support Staff are producing content in a variety of

formats – print, video, audio, online – daily.

Much of the material that the Assembly is producing is available publicly, though buried within the hierarchical architecture of the Assembly's own website. Increasingly, more is being made available through the Assembly's own social media channels. We welcome the Commission's commitment to securing a permanent home for the Assembly's archives working in partnership with the National Library of Wales. As a public resource we

recommend that these are made available in a digital format that can be easily accessed by anyone who wishes to find, use and share them.

Some material which up until now has been regarded as confidential to Members, such as committee summaries of evidence submitted, could be made publicly available. Senedd TV only has a limited range of archive material available.

More recently, a number of creative initiatives undertaken by the Assembly to promote its work have impressed us. We like the tone of voice adopted by some of its social media channels and the quality of graphics, animation and video to broadcast key messages and public relations initiatives is comparable

with national media organisations.

But much more could be done to maximise the impact of what is a tremendously content rich organisation in pursuit of its goal of engaging with all of the people of Wales. Our starting proposition is the principle that data should be open and accessible by default.

The focus of our report is on the Assembly as an organisation, rather than on the content creation of individual Assembly Members: nevertheless some of our recommendations will be directly relevant to individual Members as well.



## SECTION 2: DISCUSSION



## THE ASSEMBLY AS A CONTENT PLATFORM

---

The Assembly is a significant creator of content. On a daily basis it produces a large volume of material covering a wide range of topics targeted at a variety of audiences. In order to make best use of this wealth of information it is as important to think of the Assembly in terms of a distribution platform as it is to consider its role as curator.

For these reasons, we have discussed the potential for reimagining the Assembly itself as a content platform. Rather than absorbing ourselves in the pessimism related to the lack of media plurality in Wales, this new mind-set opens the door to exciting new opportunities for the Assembly to reach audiences directly.

The traditional media gatekeepers of TV, radio and the press remain important, but they are no longer the only players in town. Bodies such as the Assembly have the option of investing in resources to package and push their content directly to the platforms that audiences are already consuming.

We think the Assembly should lead the way and establish an integrated content service to engage directly with the people of Wales. Headed by an experienced, impartial editor we suggest establishing a small team of journalists focused on producing content about the stories coming out of the Assembly, packaged in a way that is suitable for digital platforms. This should be delivered as a distributed digital news service using social media and other channels (such as dedicated email newsletters) to engage directly with people across Wales. We think this service would also provide useful material for the scores of local and hyperlocal news publications around Wales. These stories should be used to draw audiences back to Senedd TV and the revamped Assembly website, which will provide homes for archived stories about the place where the Welsh Government is scrutinised and held to account – the National Assembly for Wales.





## TELLING THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S STORIES

### STYLE – PUT PEOPLE FIRST

The Assembly is the bedrock of a healthy Welsh democracy – so it must think creatively about the practical effect all its debates, decisions and actions have on the people it represents, and learn to communicate its work from their perspective. The aim should be to put people – rather than the organisation and its processes – at the heart of topical news stories and aim for an emotional connection. As the Assembly exists to represent

the people of Wales, it would seem reasonable to take every opportunity to consider them when explaining Assembly business, structures or policy-making. The editorial focus should be on topical subjects and how our democratic organisation can serve the people to address these subjects, rather than being about the organisation itself. The question “Why does this matter to me or my community?” should always be considered when creating content.

This is backed up by feedback we have received from various sources. The evidence suggests that on the whole the National Assembly is organised around the needs of itself as an organisation, rather than the needs of the electorate.

For example, teachers advised us strongly that young people are more likely to understand and empathise with content that focuses on issues they have experienced. The majority of respondents to our media survey suggested that local case studies are essential to the way their readers would connect with a story about a national issue. While people may not be interested in the daily grind of politics at the Assembly, they are interested in strong human interest stories. Their interest in the latter can be a way of informing them

about the former. In particular, it is important that people understand what issues are devolved and which aren't, and these stories can be a way of communicating that message in an entertaining way. By showing how the Assembly's work affects communities across Wales, the organisation can bridge the sense of geographical distance between itself and other parts of the country.

A lot of the Assembly's work lends itself well to this type of human interest content. Indeed the Assembly may be under-selling itself – the public might respond well to a behind the scenes look at how the Assembly works, what the job of an Assembly Member entails and what help staff provide to support them in their work.





Committee inquiries hear from a wide range of people including those who deliver public services, policy experts, and increasingly from a representative sample of people affected by the policy or issue under scrutiny. This provides an opportunity for the Assembly to create stories that follow the progress of the discussion, the effect people's participation has on the committee's considerations and to promote the ways that people can contribute their views in to the process.

Capturing case studies as a matter of course and creating news stories from the perspective of those affected by the Assembly's work should be pursued enthusiastically. For example, this could be done through filming live short pieces to camera with the committee chair and attendees following each meeting – asking simple questions such as “How did it go? As expected? Do you think you had the desired impact? What happens next?”, as well as asking about the difficult decisions that had to be made and the trade-offs. We believe this kind of intervention would not only appeal to the public already engaged with the Assembly, but also to those who believe they have little or no interest in politics, opening the door to them engaging with the Assembly's work for the first time.

The same principle is true when telling the story of the National Assembly. From the laws of Hywel Dda through to the industrial revolution, the Assembly can be grounded within a common history that will appeal to people's imaginations and sense of belonging. There is also a lack of information about the organisation's purpose, powers and relationship with the Welsh Government, local authorities and UK Parliament. Understanding the connections, differences and working relationships between the Assembly and these organisations is absolutely crucial if we are to address the democratic information deficit that has been identified by consecutive electoral data surveys. Not enough people know how the Assembly works, what Assembly Members do and how – for example - the Wales Act 2017 widens its powers. This information can be very difficult to find in print, online and on the estate and when found the user often feels short changed by the lack of creativity and imagination. Consider using videos with celebrities, the public and users, graphics and illustrations to explain this content so that they suit any format or platform.

## LANGUAGE

More brands are competing for space on news and information channels than ever before. Today, parliaments compete with multinational corporations, international non-governmental agencies and members of the public for time and visibility. Enabling the public to identify your organisation, understand what you are saying quickly and empowering them to take action is absolutely essential if you are to survive and thrive. The Assembly needs to ensure that it adopts this approach.

In this context, another change the Assembly should consider so that it can better connect with the public is to use language they understand. Clear and concise copy will help audiences find what they need and understand what they find so that they can share that information. We think that this change is essential to opening up the Assembly and applies to both Welsh and English as the organisation's official languages.

Some of the language used by parliaments can be intimidating to an external audience – calling witnesses to provide evidence for example. The Assembly needs to distinguish between when it's talking to an internal audience versus when it's talking to an external audience. Where the latter is the case, accessible language should be used and short explainers developed to describe what the formal terminology means. Occasionally, organisations assume these jargon busters are only relevant when engaging with a younger audience but our experience is that these are easily transferable to a wider group and have a tremendously positive effect when used.

Alongside this, we suggest the Assembly reviews the guidance in place about the tone of voice it applies to all its communication channels. As an expression of an organisation's values, personality and way of thinking, a particular tone of voice can have a significant impact on the ability to connect with audiences. If managed carefully, the tone can vary depending on the channel, allowing corporate accounts to adopt a more formal tone in comparison with channels that aim to engage with visitors or tourists for example. We recognise that the Assembly's corporate and youth Twitter accounts in particular aren't afraid of using humour or a relaxed tone of voice when the subject lends itself to that approach. Clear guidance setting out the dos, don'ts, opportunities and pitfalls of different approaches should be established so that existing and new staff can communicate confidently as organisational ambassadors.







## PLATFORMS

---

### THE ASSEMBLY WEBSITE

While people will increasingly engage with the Assembly away from the website, it remains a fundamentally important part of the way the Assembly communicates. The website is critical infrastructure, and should be treated with similar importance to the physical estate.

The site's information architecture must be designed around the user, rather than reflecting the structure of the Assembly. Too often content is described or labelled in ways that make sense only to those who understand it. The Assembly needs to take a step back and consider the variety of ways people might think about a subject and start using a wider range of tools and techniques to ensure that everything produced is easily discoverable to a wider audience.

Taxonomies (the way that content is classified and organised in to categories and subcategories) must reflect how people are most likely to find content. This should include referencing complex technical (or legal) subjects in plain-language and ensuring that it is fully searchable. Categorising and tagging information will always require human intervention and so anyone responsible for creating or publishing any form of content (whether it's video, audio, imagery or written content) must understand the rules of engagement to make content accessible and discoverable.

Users of the Assembly's online services told us how difficult and frustrating finding information can be, since it is often diffused across the website. Over time the Assembly's content has been developed and presented to match the organisation's internal structure and as a result information is disjointed and inconsistent. In order to make it easier for users to discover content it is essential that the website architecture is developed in a way that makes sense to the user rather than being based on the organisation structure. The Assembly needs to work towards delivering a seamless user experience between its web portals so that the online estate is more joined-up. To do this all portals and content need to be meaningfully interlinked, particularly where promoting related content is an option, and back-end systems must also 'talk' to each other so that content can be easily discovered.



Users also raised concerns about the lack of consistency and accuracy in publishing business information e.g. why do timescales for committee forward work programmes vary? Why isn't information about cross party groups published centrally? Why aren't written answers and questions matched and why isn't there an online booking function for Assembly Member sponsored events?

A repository of pictures and videos available under an open license should be included on the Assembly websites for public and commercial use. This should include various pictures of each Assembly Member (formal and informal), as well as aerial footage and photographs of the Senedd building itself.

---

**POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS OFFERED BY USERS AS 'QUICK WINS' THAT WOULD IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE IMMEDIATELY INCLUDE:**

- **Creating a new longer term forward look** presenting everything happening across the Assembly for that day, week or month on one page instead of having to trawl through the calendar system, with a clear and comprehensive calendar / guide to what's happening in the Assembly on the website landing page.
- **Building on what was considered to be a successful revamp of Member pages**, by aggregating the relevant information about their work (oral and written questions asked, contributions to debates) on their pages. We welcome that the MySenedd programme is due to deliver this in September.
- **Making connections between various aspects of Assembly business and presenting information accordingly** such as putting the written questions and answers provided on the same page.
- **Providing information to the public about your timescales for publication as a minimum** so that expectations are managed.
- **Providing contact details for more staff** so that the public can engage directly with researchers, committee staff, outreach and front of house staff.

---

**We recommend that these solutions are explored at the earliest opportunity so that the Assembly can know for sure that its online channels are considered as trusted and reliable sources of information.**

**We also recommend that the Assembly develops a sophisticated evaluation framework to measure how content is being consumed to allow for evidence-based decision making and continual improvement.**

## SENEDD TV

Work to improve Senedd TV is underway and includes improvements that will solve issues fundamental to its credibility, such as the reliability of the service. If it is to remain as a cornerstone of the Assembly's communications strategy, its streaming content must be open and clean, easy to search, edit, download and embed. To do this the Assembly must develop a tool that works with Senedd TV allowing anyone to quickly find and clip footage, which can be included in video packages or embedded on Member pages, external websites and social media platforms.

The way in which the Assembly's 90 second statements are edited and published onto the Assembly's Facebook page is a good example of the potential reach and impact of short video clips. The Assembly's most watched video to date is a 90 second statement about renaming Cardigan to Jumper to promote Save the Children's Christmas Jumper day in December 2016.

This is introductory content people will watch and external news and content providers (including Assembly Members and hyperlocal journalists) would like to publish, but we know that producing it hasn't been an easy job – not even for Assembly officials with direct access to the technology. Any future changes to Senedd TV should always take users' needs and wishes into account at the beginning of the process.

The Assembly is also working on broadcasting live proceedings on social channels such as Facebook Live and live Plenary meetings were launched on YouTube at the start of the 2017 summer term. This will provide an alternative and reliable live broadcasting channel for the Assembly that will make footage more accessible and sharable. It also means that proceedings will be broadcast live on a platform that is already used by over 1.3 billion people, significantly increasing the chances of widening audience reach.



SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

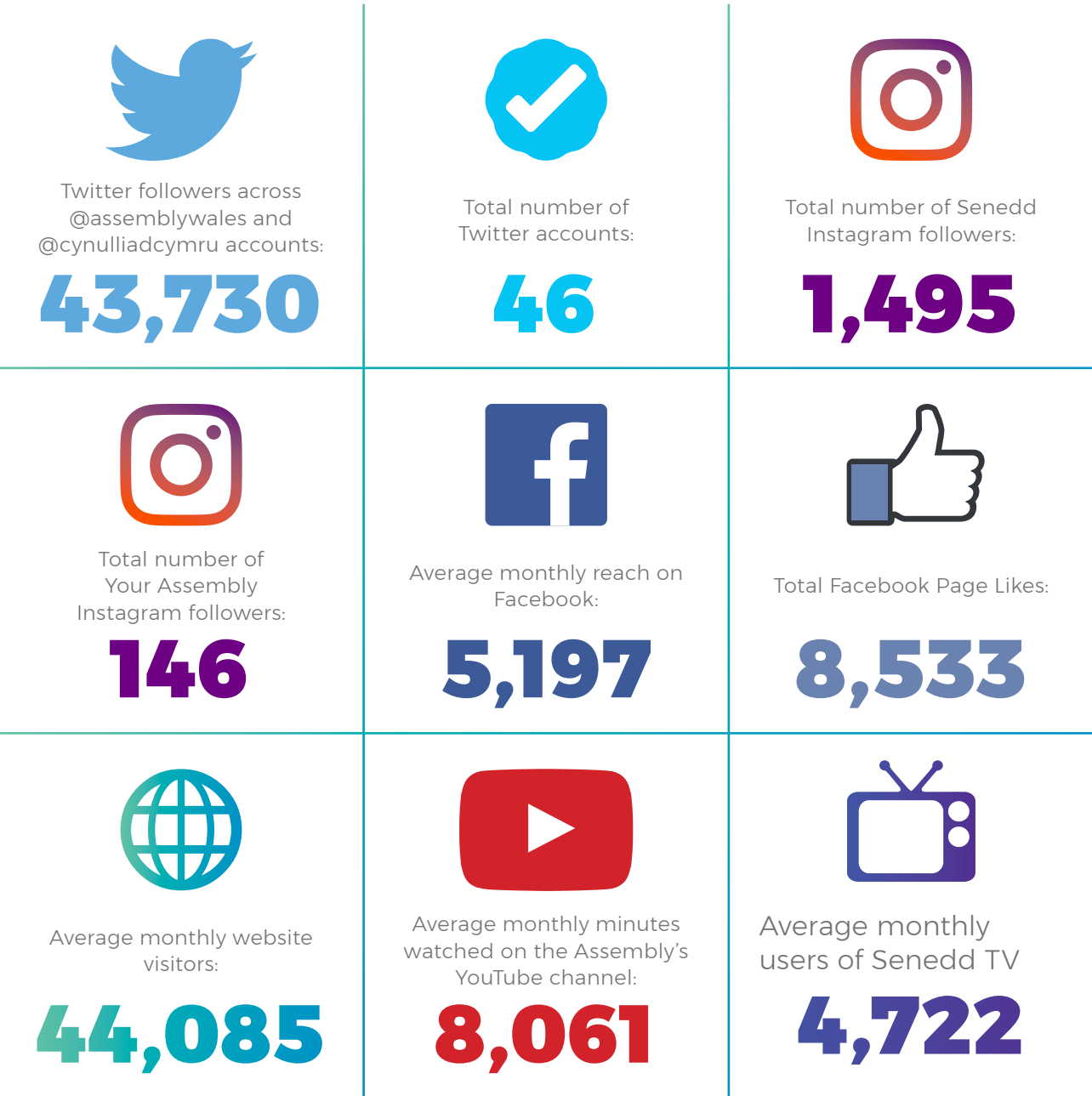
The Assembly should consider reviewing the structure of its social media channels. Managing 50 social media feeds may look impressive on a performance management report, but is there evidence to back up the claims that they are all necessary? Is there a better way of packaging information about “health” in a one stop shop that includes the relevant committee, research and Plenary information?

Evidence gathered from the Assembly’s own user needs analysis survey in response to the question “What can we do to encourage more people to become involved in the work of the Assembly?” suggests that “More presence in the community” is a priority for many. For this reason, we encourage the Assembly to use social media for engagement, and not purely broadcasting purposes and more emphasis should be put on contributing to existing conversations rather than trying to always lead new ones. The Assembly should find online conversations and communities (such as Mumsnet as well as locality and topic based groups) and get involved and use targeted online advertising for

input-gathering activities (surveys, committees, etc). To support this the Assembly should invest in smart social media analytics to provide it with a regular flow of information and understanding of hot topics and online conversations relevant to its own content.

Closing the feedback loop is also important and the Assembly needs to be more effective at encouraging and acknowledging incoming information. If the Assembly creates more opportunities for people to contribute easily to its work, equal credit for the end result needs to be given to citizens – not just politicians – take every opportunity to show their input has been heard and where relevant, made a difference. Promoting these stories will in turn encourage more engagement as citizens will feel that their input is valued and therefore making contributions is worthwhile.

The digital landscape will continue to evolve and the Assembly’s audiences will adopt new news channels and platforms. The Assembly needs to embrace this and develop a digital culture with the right attitude and skillset to adapt to this constant change.







## SPECIALIST AUDIENCES

### THE MEDIA

If the Assembly itself is a content platform, it makes less and less sense to think of the established media as requiring support that is different from other audiences. Our argument is that the Assembly as an organisation should bolster its direct reach to the wider public. Creative packaging of Assembly information at source would benefit the established media as well. While established and well-resourced media organisations such as the BBC and ITV will capture most of the material they need themselves, other smaller outlets will need additional, targeted support.

Responses to our media survey, limited to Welsh regional and national media, have identified a direct need for clear, concise, inspiring copy that provides an at-a-glance summary of comprehensive reports. In some cases, visual data (maps, infographics and animations) to illustrate the findings and access to “real people case studies” were also requested. The survey responses suggest that while the production of video content may be crucial for the purpose of promoting the

Assembly’s work on its own channels, network news organisations in Wales will simply not use it if provided.

The Assembly has made good use of new communications tools over the years, and was in many respects ahead of the curve. It introduced audio and video clips to news packages in 2009-10. However, take up was low and the service was discontinued soon after before being reintroduced on social media a few years later.

The Assembly must exploit all alternatives to the press release as a means of promoting its work. Maps, infographics, blogs and neat summaries all have the potential to articulate difficult messaging in a memorable way. The Office of National Statistics’ [visual.ons](#) website is a particularly good example of how this can be achieved. Having understood the breadth and depth of information and briefing materials generated by the Assembly’s research service, we recommend that this data-rich service’s outputs are included as a core part of Assembly news and information content packages in future.

There are clear consequences for the Assembly’s Communications team. The role of the Assembly’s media team needs to change to a focus on writing for digital outlets and digital distribution, making it as easy as possible for the





media across Wales to cover the Assembly. This includes those writing for a local or hyperlocal audience, and those writing on specific topics and subject areas. Pan-Wales stories need to be written in such a way that makes it easy for news outlets to develop a local angle, given that only one publisher covers the whole of Wales the majority will be looking to adapt the story to fit their community needs. Developing community angles in released material will therefore be particularly important, not least to communities such as the north-east, that feel as geographically distant from Cardiff as they do from London.

The Communications team needs to possess other skills such as content production. It may be that they will need to divert time and resources from supporting those who already cover the daily 'churn' of Assembly politics – committees, etc. – and refocus the bulk of their resources on attempting to reach the majority who have a limited understanding, access and interest in their services currently. In order to support the diversification of the role of the media team, other staff need to see writing for publication as part of their role, beyond report-writing itself, with training for writing in different formats, including blogs, articles and social media content.

We also discussed how to secure the best possible coverage for committee publications. There needs to be a proper editorial process for the production of committee reports, with a grid system in place to schedule release of reports agreed by the Assembly Commissioners and committee chairs. Authority needs to be asserted over this process directly by the Llywydd and her team to rule on publication decisions for committee reports in line with the overall communications strategy of the National Assembly. Timeliness is important, meaning the publishing model should be given careful consideration. There needs to be more forward planning to make the most of opportunities when they do arise and create a constant flow of topical content.





## LEARNING

From the outset, the Assembly has invested in a significant education programme with outreach to schools in Wales. Young people are today's citizens and tomorrow's voters. We are passionate supporters of the Commission's plans to establish a Welsh youth parliament. It will build on what is already a successful Education and Youth Engagement team that has evolved considerably over recent years. The youth parliament should further strengthen the Assembly's relationship with the young people of Wales and we believe that proactive, meaningful digital news and information will be crucial to its success. We understand that the youth parliament consultation considers communication needs in detail and will be actioned by the youth parliament when it is established early in 2018.

We had the opportunity to explore how the Assembly's education programme could be developed digitally through discussion with members of the Welsh Government's National Digital Learning Council (NDLC), teachers, and college principals, and benefited from having a member of the NDLC on our Taskforce. The proposals below relating to schools come from direct engagement with teachers and recent feedback young people have shared with the Assembly about how well they think it communicates its work.

A dedicated, easy-to-use National Assembly for Wales area should be established on the Hwb resource repository with resources for teaching that are mapped to the needs of the new curriculum currently being developed. This will provide learners and teachers with opportunities to use and create materials that will be available to others on the National Assembly for Wales' site within Hwb. One educator specifically reminded us not to "forget primary schools. The appetite is huge within the primary sector [and they] are a lot more flexible".

For older learners the Assembly's Communications team should establish strong contacts with Welsh Higher and Further Education Institutions to facilitate easier engagement with the Senedd and explore the potential of developing a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) about its work.

Recognising that the children and young people's website ([www.yourassembly.org](http://www.yourassembly.org)) needs significant development, we also think that the Assembly should use social media platforms best suited to engage with this audience in line with current trends - not just those used by officials. OFCOM's recent consumer trends research suggests that these are Snapchat,





According to official Welsh Government published figures , over 550,000 school students and teachers use the Welsh Government's Hwb platform. All schools have access to this ready-made platform which is accessed by over one-sixth of the population of Wales. We believe that the National Assembly should link closely to Hwb.

Instagram and WhatsApp and we know that about 60% of millennials now get their news in the first instance from Facebook. Times change quickly and next year's on-trend channels could be different to this year's making digital adaptability essential, especially if the soon to be established youth parliament is to communicate its work successfully.

Testing content to make sure that it is clear and memorable was a key issue for educators. They suggested that simple videos on platforms such as YouTube explaining elements of the Assembly would work well and that including young people in the creative process, as they have done in the Oireachtas, would be beneficial. The UK Parliament's education site ([www.parliament.uk/education](http://www.parliament.uk/education)) also contains some good examples of materials that could be created. Alternatively, it was suggested to us that providing secondment opportunities for teaching staff to develop resources for the Assembly, as they do in the

UK Parliament, could be an option worth investigating. The Assembly needs to embrace the potential for digital engagement utilising Skype, Facetime, Facebook Live and other platforms, incorporating as appropriate Virtual Reality or Augmented Reality. This could occur in the Senedd, Pierhead or online within the schools. Improved engagement in this way has the potential to reach a wider audience as learners will bring home this new engagement and knowledge to families and communities.

In all cases, incorporating the experiences of young people in print, video and audio content was deemed essential given the effectiveness of peer to peer advocacy. We recommend that the education team encourages the production of student-produced materials including mini-films, which could then be re-versioned for the wider public.

There is an appetite and enthusiasm from the sector for inspiring Assembly content that is clearly linked to the curriculum, grounded in real life experiences and told by young people themselves.



## CIVIC SOCIETY

The Assembly has been world leading in its community outreach work, but if it wants to build awareness, trust and promote the relevance of the organisation to the people of Wales then it is time for a step change in the quality of its digital outreach. We think it could improve its partnerships with a variety of external organisations and individuals to disseminate its content and channel and aggregate information back.

We are seeing the rise of new intermediaries beyond parliament. These are individuals and groups who can take the information and data that parliaments create, whether formally or informally, and make sense of it for and with citizens. Key to a new content publishing and channel strategy is advocacy – working with partners to provide them with content relevant to their membership or readership so that they can, if deemed appropriate, promote to their followers.

The Assembly should explore how civil society organisations: the business community, the unions, the NHS, third sector organisations and local government communicate digitally with their public and work with them to provide Assembly content they may want to use for their own communications platforms. This means seeking opportunities for these organisations to communicate information about the Assembly authentically and in their own style. If we want to build awareness, trust and promote the relevance of the organisation to the people of Wales then it is important for people to see the Assembly at work, what it is doing for them and how it is listening to their views.





## THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The Senedd and Pierhead are iconic buildings and major tourist attractions. Collectively they have received over 188,000 visitors since the May 2016 election. The total number of visitors to both buildings since the Senedd opened in 2006 now exceeds 2 Million. Just as important is Tŷ Hywel, home to the Assembly's education and youth engagement centre with Siambr Hywel as its focal point – the Assembly's dedicated chamber for youth debate.

Every opportunity to use the buildings as platforms to tell the Assembly's story should be maximised. The Senedd and Pierhead buildings are considerably underutilised as national stages to

present the Assembly's history and work – it is far too easy to visit the Senedd not having learned anything about its work as a legislature. Tour guides provide a personalised visitor experience for those who wish to take up the offer, but for those who wish to explore on their own terms the supporting infrastructure is inadequate.

We know that people are less likely to distinguish between digital and physical experiences with an organisation or brand. This means that the whole experience must be given careful consideration, rather than looking at interactions in isolation. This balance must be considered as part of any content strategy or style guide, and whenever content is commissioned or produced, every opportunity should

be taken to tell the Assembly's story whenever visitors arrive at the Assembly estate.

Further thought should be given to the visitor experience at the Senedd and the Pierhead. The security at the Senedd is obviously essential, but more could be done to encourage visitors to enter, a greeter could be available to reassure and guide people through the process. There should be an engaging, interactive and future proofed learning experience within the Assembly estate, that is people focused, showcasing case studies to make politics real to the visitors.

Videos of individual case studies could be projected onto the glass screens surrounding the Siambr

- this would bring proceedings to life for visitors and provide them with a better understanding of how engaging with Assembly members can trigger action which leads to impact. The Assembly could also consider installing a video wall that offers the ability to explore visitor comments and case studies

Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are becoming key demonstration mechanisms for multimedia experiences at visitor attractions around the world. A radical idea would be to install a live, 360° camera at the centre of the Siambr. While keeping the camera as unobtrusive as possible, it would allow a member of the public to feel that they are in the Siambr, at ground level, during a debate, experiencing the debate in the way





**We have considered many international examples that make good use of technology to promote organisations' raison d'être and contribute to an excellent visitor experience including the European Parliament's visitor centre Parlamentarium which makes excellent use of technology for tours.**

**The UK Parliament's investment in a new education centre uses 360° projection and sound technology to immerse visitors in the history of parliament and bring it to life. Here, intelligent use of technology coupled with imaginative content make iconic buildings with legendary histories come to life.**

**These examples make use of wind-up story telling modules, interactive floor projections and include a call to action as part of the content package meaning that visitors leave feeling engaged and informed.**

that any Assembly Member would. As the use of VR grows over the next few years this camera would attract greater and greater use. It would not only generate positive headlines for the Assembly as a world-leading innovation, but would also make Welsh politics feel much more accessible and human than the fixed, 'top down', camera angles that are used in Parliaments around the world at the moment, which foster a feeling of detachment and alienation.

In the Pierhead there should be a refocus on Wales' political story. While the ground floor could be maintained for conferences and other events, the first floor could be used as a developing museum. The current arrangement is rather disjointed, with a mishmash of interesting but uncorrelated displays in a few small rooms. Better use of this space would give the organisation a sense of place and meaning. Consideration

needs to be given to a more 'curated' experience, and one that forges a closer link with the Assembly itself.

Externally, more use could be made of the Senedd's physical estate. The Senedd proceedings could be made more visible and accessible to people walking past by projecting the schedule and invitations to enter on the glass walls near the entrance.

All these ideas would bring the Assembly to life to those visiting or passing by.

The Assembly should consider every contact point within and beyond the Senedd and the Pierhead in terms of not simply the actual engagement that is taking place but how this builds on and supports long term repeat engagement and trust building. The estate should be used to provide more

opportunities to empower the public to leave comments, questions or suggestions for Assembly Members and to contribute to the Assembly's work, for example through video booths. Visitors should be given the opportunity to enter data about themselves onsite, to identify issues under discussion relevant to their locality or subject matter interest, for example health, education, and to give permission for follow up contact through email newsletters subsequently. Indeed, more generally there is a need to capture data on those visiting the Assembly and the outreach events held by various Assembly teams.

Finally, members of the Taskforce were astounded to learn that the Assembly has no Customer Relationship Management (CRM) strategy in place. Though the number of visitors to the estate is great, it pales in comparison to the number of people that engage with the Assembly as a whole on an annual basis.

The Assembly's reach includes extensive education and youth engagement programmes, community outreach and presence at national events, visitors to websites, social media followers, stakeholders engaging with committee business, research academic programmes and recruitment exercises. Overall, the Assembly engages with tens of thousands of people on an annual basis.

Each contact must be captured effectively if the Assembly is to maintain a healthy dialogue with the public it serves. This means providing ample and accessible

opportunities for the public to entrust the Assembly with their data, managing the data safely and using it to maintain meaningful contact. For this purpose, the Assembly should prioritise the development of a customer relationship strategy and acquire a simple off the shelf system to resolve the immediate need. This will allow the Assembly to gather requirements for a more comprehensive system that can then be implemented further down the line. An organisational system would encourage cross-service integration, minimise current duplication of effort, for example building numerous stakeholder databases, and potentially deliver significant efficiencies.

Crucially, it would also provide a sound basis for developing long term relationships between the Assembly and the people of Wales.





## 2019 - THE ASSEMBLY'S TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

The National Assembly will be 20 years old in May 2019. We recommend that the twentieth anniversary is at the heart of a campaign to promote the stories of devolution, and recommend to the Llywydd that she consider organising A Festival of Welsh Democracy to coincide with that anniversary.

We make no comment at this stage on the content of that campaign and festival – that is for others to decide. However, it would be a shame to miss the opportunity that the twentieth anniversary brings.





## DIGITAL AND DATA LEADERSHIP IN THE ASSEMBLY

By establishing this group, the Llywydd has taken leadership over the Assembly's digital interaction with the people of Wales, and we recommend that this is carried forward into the future.

To deliver all of our recommendations, the Assembly needs to be skilled and knowledgeable in the latest in digital best practice across the organisation and communicate progress regularly. In particular any roles responsible

for creating online content and data must be able to work to the latest accessibility and Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) practices and, where applicable, be well versed in the latest data protection and privacy regulations.

Open data is defined by the Open Definition ([opendefinition.org](http://opendefinition.org)) as "data that can be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone - subject only, at most, to the requirement to attribute and share alike". While Wales

is seeing an increase in interest and discussions around open data, the culture to create and engage with open data is still very much in the early stages.

We agree with the Open Data Charter in that open data enables governments, citizens, and civil society and private sector organisations to make better informed decisions as well as working towards better outcomes for public services. Being open with data and content means more than simply making it available online - it is also about promoting its availability and usability. We have reviewed the Assembly's current approach, and whilst a certain amount of data is openly available it is not easy to find, access or use. We were pleased to learn that the Assembly has already

started to look at an Open Data strategy and would recommend that it makes significant, visual changes to demonstrate its commitment.

We recommend that the Assembly engages with specialists in the field to shape its Open Data strategy. Data journalists, data scientists, the Open Data Institute (ODI) and the National Archives' Information Fair Trader Scheme (IFTS), WISERD and ONS would all be good sources of expertise. Developing the strategy in collaboration with area specialists users will result in a more user focused end result.

The organisation sits on a wealth of information - photography, video, data, maps that are a significant contribution to Welsh public life. We



think this information should be more easily available to the people the Assembly represents.

While the data produced by the Assembly is somewhat limited in scope, it is very important to a certain audience. The data itself is technically 'open' but more could be done to make this accessible and useful to those who use it on a regular basis, for example ensuring that all data is open by default and is tagged appropriately and made available through open APIs (Application Programming Interface). Given this relatively small audience, close collaboration with professional and regular users of Assembly data, such as monitoring providers and journalists at national, local and hyperlocal levels, should be a priority.

The Taskforce visited one such organisation, News Direct Wales, to understand for ourselves how the data is used and to consider the challenges of accessing it in its current state. We found that a large amount of time and effort is put into manually finding and acquiring data. Siloed information as well as a lack of consistency when it comes to language, formatting and publishing frustrates users and results in inefficiencies.

The Assembly needs to do more research to find out who would use its open data sets, how they would be used and which data sets should be prioritised. In order to do this, the Assembly needs to build relationships with the open data community and become actively involved with them. Companies House operate a developer forum, where a small community of developers who use their data can ask questions to Companies House and share ideas with each other regularly. This has been well received, particularly by groups who campaign for more open data.

Making content and data available online is no good unless people know that it's there and that it's also easy to find and use. Once data has been made easily accessible the Assembly needs to put together an ongoing promotional plan targeting likely users of the data to drive awareness of the Assembly's approach, promote the data sets and showcase examples of how the data could be used so that any audience that has an interest in using it knows what's available, where to find it and how they can access it with as few barriers as possible.

We propose that the Assembly establishes an Open Data team and that they should work closely with the previously mentioned integrated content service. Data journalism would be an important part of this service, providing the public with maps and visualisations based on open data that would engage the public on an accessible, easy to understand and visual level. Where data is not publicly available, they would also have a role in requesting data from committees or from the Welsh Government. This data could be published on the Assembly's own news portal and could also be made available to journalists and the public through press releases and social media.

As part of the strategy, consideration should be given to how to measure the success of the Assembly's approach to open data. For example, the Office of National Statistics measures the reach and the impact of its work not how much data it opens up. The Assembly should take a similar approach - ultimately, the strategy should be judged on how people are using the data not how many data sets are available.

In order to establish itself as a leading figure in this area the Assembly needs to make sure that it has the skills and knowledge internally to not only create and deliver an industry leading Open Data strategy, but to also demonstrate innovative ways that the Assembly's open data can be used.

## CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS – PUTTING USERS FIRST

We recognise that the recommendations within our report carry significant cultural and staffing implications.

User needs should be at the heart of new service design. Until now, new digital services created by the Assembly have primarily had the needs and aims of the Assembly in mind and were led by technology choices. We have highlighted many examples that demonstrate the pitfalls of this approach in our report and we think this needs to change.

Any good marketing or engagement strategy will have at its heart an understanding of who it is trying to connect with and for what purpose. The Assembly's approach to the creation of any new service needs to place the end user firmly at its heart rather than being led by the organisation. To do this the Assembly needs to get closer to, and remain close to, its users. We recognise that through the MySenedd programme, the Assembly is committing to changing in this way. As a programme of regular practical improvements focused on improving the digital experience of the National Assembly for the people of Wales, Members and staff, creating a more engaging and personalised experience for all. MySenedd will aim to make Assembly information more accessible, relevant, easier to find, understand, share and re-use.

Survey work has recently been carried out with members of the public across Wales and individuals and organisations that regularly work with the Assembly. While over half of respondents had not used any of the Assembly's on-line services, of those that had the majority had used one or more of the Assembly websites (including Your Assembly and Senned TV). Twitter was the most popular of the social media channels followed by Facebook.

Respondents to the survey stated they get information on Welsh politics through the traditional means of television, newspapers and radio than through websites, social media and smart phone apps. More respondents sourced information on politics in Wales through social media than through Websites and blogs. Approximately three quarters of respondents had viewed meetings of the Assembly as either short clips or longer passages.

A number of strong themes emerged when respondents were asked for their ideas for improving both our on-line services and the way we engage with them. Respondents identified:

- the need for better promotion of services;
- improved layouts;
- easy to find information and the use of clear and simple language;
- the need for better promotion of the work of the Assembly;
- engagement at a local level and on local issues;
- more focus on engaging young people; and
- more accessibility to Members.

The Assembly needs to clearly define what “engagement” looks like for each point of interaction. There are many frameworks to help with this (Jobs To Be Done, User Centred Design, Design Thinking, Service Design, etc), but the main question to be asking is “What do we want the citizen to do – and more importantly, what is the benefit to the citizen – during this interaction?”

Committing to continue with this approach will ensure that people's opinions aren't simply gathered at the outset of the project and then overwritten as progress is made, but that the voice of the user is woven throughout the process and always kept at the heart of every decision.





## MANAGING CHANGE

Whilst some areas of the Assembly have adopted an agile project management approach and are doing brilliant work leading the way for the rest of the organisation, notably the MySenedd team, when it comes to staying on top of the ever changing world of digital and technological trends, and best practice developments the Assembly has to learn to be more nimble.

Working in a political environment carries with it unique issues and expectations, particularly in terms of accountability and transparency. Understandably, this can lead to a culture of risk-aversion and a general reluctance to embrace the new and innovative. This can in turn lead to internal inefficiencies and perceptions that our democratic organisations are slow to respond to change and increasingly out of touch with the communities they represent.

In order to achieve the ambition of being a world class e-parliament, the culture of the Assembly needs to ensure that innovation and progress aren't stifled by process, procedure and administration. The organisation needs to learn from the Lean Start Up movement and become agile and develop a culture of build > measure > learn so that products and services can be developed and released quickly and iteratively.

Occasionally, this will mean that new products or processes introduced will not be perfect from the outset and may even fail. We believe however that the Assembly needs to develop a culture where people feel not only able, but empowered to try new things without fearing the consequences of it not going exactly to plan. Creating this environment relies on people knowing they can fail fast and fail safely, this is far preferable to failing after months of expensive work that is undertaken behind closed doors.

This approach encourages 'little and often' over and above the 'big bang reveal'. One of the benefits of this is that when things aren't quite right it's less obvious. This is even more the case when development is done in the open and where improving the users' experience is the aim. We think the public will be quick to embrace small but regular improvements to services as opposed to big improvements following long periods of development.

The Assembly needs to ensure digital becomes built in to all Assembly processes and develop an understanding that digital is not just about technology.



## STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

New digital tools are strengthening and transforming parliaments. Where Members provide political leadership in favour of greater openness and greater citizen participation, and where staff are receptive to new ways of working, parliaments are becoming more accessible and, internally, more efficient.

Around the world, successful digital parliaments mirror the environment around them. There is a continued adoption of document management systems to support the legislative process and with this comes more open data and open publishing.

Social media has become a key, strategic communication channel for parliaments in a digital world that is now decidedly multi-channel. It can, however, be difficult for parliaments to know how Members are using these new tools and how best to provide support to them. Despite the advent of social media, email remains a primary communication channel for most Members and parliamentary websites remain a core asset in terms of providing information, documentation and data.

The National Assembly for Wales operates within an environment where a wide range of digital skills, including data analytics and visualisation, digital content management and distribution, application and software development, digital media and understanding of user-focussed technology are essential for the development of engaging content. What follows are some of the organisational and cultural changes we think the programme

should incorporate to deliver our recommendations.

All Assembly staff should consider themselves as content producers. Anything published for public consumption from the date and time of Plenary meetings, press releases, Tweets communicating Senedd opening times, committee reports, legislation flowcharts and business forward work programmes must be communicated with the external audience in mind. It will impact some more than others. The traditional roles within the Assembly mostly mirror the wider parliamentary landscape. However, in the modern era where we are trying to make the Assembly more open and easier to access, we need to rethink the purpose and responsibilities associated with these roles. For example, the committee clerk is now perhaps more of a project manager with responsibility for considering outreach and engagement from the beginning of the process.

We believe that the Assembly must put in place a mandatory, ongoing training programme to help the organisation deliver successful digital communication – for example, teaching not only the mechanics of using Twitter, but also how to write Tweets to connect with the audience. Opportunities need to be

provided for staff to learn how to publish agendas and minutes onto committee web pages, but also make time for clerking teams to consider the role they play in creating live, topical content relevant to the committees' work programme. At the very least, all services should work together to agree degrees of consistency to content design and publishing so that the public know when information will be published and where to find it. Once agreed, processes and guidance should be adhered to. Without these assurances, the Assembly's outward facing digital presence runs the risk of looking disjointed, being guided by internal needs and potentially undermining the Assembly's ambition of engaging with all of the people of Wales.

Meaningful digital transformation means making digital something the Assembly is, rather than does. This requires more than passionate practitioners, so we recommend that the Assembly puts in place a senior position to drive the digital agenda. Creating an agile, digital-first culture is something that will require strong leadership across the organisation

– not just within the transformation, technology, and communications teams.

Day-to-day operations, communications and technology should be bought together to bring digital to the heart of the Assembly's operational strategy. The "Digital" team should have dedicated, embedded members of "IT" to ensure the goals of both teams are aligned with respect to the Assembly's web services.

Doing all of this properly is not a trivial task – there is no silver bullet. Technology is changing all the time so if the Assembly is to commit to continuously improve then it must invest in the right people to lead the charge. The Assembly should not underestimate the time, specialist skills, expert senior leadership and resource required to deliver our recommendations.





## STAYING AHEAD

---

This is our report, today in mid-2017. Technology is changing and will develop further, with advancements in augmented and virtual reality, in artificial intelligence and machine-learning, in new platforms, in voice and image recognition and many other ways. Consequently, the recommendations in our report should be kept under active review and there should be a specific lead commissioner responsible for driving these forward.

The Commission needs to consider what continued development is required for the future and what research or next steps are needed to ensure the right offer and team are in place within the next 6 months.

There needs to be a clear implementation plan, and a clear development plan for the future. This will ensure that the Assembly's ambition to be an innovative and world class parliament is always reflected within its digital services.

The publication of this report concludes our work as a Taskforce. Though the focus of our deliberations and discussions was the Assembly, we hope that our research and recommendations will be of use to anyone seeking to deliver excellent digital services, particularly in the Welsh context.



# ANNEXES

# ANNEX 1: MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS HELD

The Taskforce met on seven occasions between October 2016 and June 2017.

Sub-group meetings were held to discuss:

- Journalism
- Open data
- Hack day
- Education.

Meetings were held with:

- National Digital Learning Council
- Members of Public Affairs Cymru.
- Political Unit, BBC Cymru Wales
- Cardiff Dev Slack group
- Colegau Cymru

Site visits and tours of the Senedd and the Pierhead took place on Friday 16 December 2016.

A hack-day, titled Senedd Lab, was held on Friday 24 and Saturday 25 March 2017. Over the past decade

hack days have become a well-established tool that provide attendees with freedom to pursue innovative approaches usually around specific themes or challenges. In a move away from the standard hack day agenda, a number of organisations (for example Good For Nothing) have established hack days around bringing together creatives, developers and innovators to focus on resolving real-world problems experienced by local communities and accelerating the impact of social good.

This was the approach followed by the Assembly's inaugural hack day, Senedd Lab. The focus of the event was on discussing, sharing and bringing ideas to life that would help to change the future of democratic culture in Wales. Details of this event are set out in Annex Three. A further Senedd Lab is planned for 2018.

## SURVEYS

Findings from surveys, both existing and specifically undertaken for the purpose of the Taskforce, were considered by group members and have contributed to our recommendations. These surveys include:

- **User Needs Analysis of the people of Wales:**  
This work was commissioned as part of the MySenedd programme, emerging trends were shared with the Taskforce. The aim of the survey is to develop a better understanding of how to engage more of the people of Wales more often in the business of the Assembly, and how to improve the experience of those that do engage, both now and in the future. Surveys were carried out both online and in person at locations across Wales.
- **Welsh media:**  
A summary of the findings from this survey can be found in Annex 5.
- **Assembly Members.**



## ANNEX 2: MEMBERSHIP

---

### **Leighton Andrews (Chair)**

Leighton Andrews is Professor of Practice in Public Service Leadership and Innovation at Cardiff Business School. He was Assembly Member for the Rhondda from 2003 to 2016, and a Welsh Government Minister between 2007 and 2016. He was one of the founders of the Yes for Wales campaign in the 1997 referendum, and chaired the steering group for the 2011 referendum campaign. Leighton was Head of Public Affairs for the BBC from 1993-96, responsible for the corporation's relationships with the UK and European Parliaments.

### **Cath Allen**

Cath has 27 years' experience in several production and leadership roles at the BBC. She is a former Board Member for BBC Cymru Wales and former Managing Editor of the BBC Wales Political Unit. She is now Director of Cath Allen Associates, a company specialising in delivering collaborative and creative transformation for individuals and teams across the public, private and third sectors

### **James Downes**

James is Head of Product at Companies House. He has been deeply involved in the strategy, design, development, delivery and continual improvement of digital products and services for over 18 years and has delivered transformative digital projects in central government, charity, finance, membership, heritage, education and automotive sectors.

### **Ifan Morgan Jones**

Ifan is the Journalism Course Leader at the School of Creative Studies and Media at Bangor University. Before joining the University, Ifan worked as a reporter and then deputy editor of Golwg Magazine, and the editor of the Golwg 360 news website. He is currently researching the effect of communication technology on the Welsh language, with special attention paid to the periodical press in the 19th century and the digital revolution in the present day.

### **Valerie Livingston**

Valerie is a public affairs professional and small business owner with extensive media expertise. She founded her own political research company in 2011. The company, newsdirect wales, reports on

developments in the National Assembly and provides policy briefings to a wide range of private, public and voluntary sector clients. Prior to launching the company, Valerie was a senior press officer for the SNP at Westminster. She has also spent time working in the Scottish and European Parliaments and on several election campaigns. More recently, she has been a regular political commentator appearing on the BBC, ITV and Channel 4.

### **Hannah Mathias**

Hannah is a Learning Technology and Resources expert and E-Learning Manager at Cardiff and Vale College. Building and implementing Moodle and SharePoint 2010 systems. Her specialties are Learning Technologies; eResources; Social Media; Mobile Technologies; Video editing; audio editing; HTML; SharePoint architecture; Moodle administration and design, and Web 2.0.

### **Emma Meese**

Emma Meese manages Cardiff University's Centre for Community Journalism (@C4CJ), a unique fusion of research and practice committed to developing a strong network of hyperlocal and community journalism in Wales. She is also running a series of short courses at Cardiff, giving everyone access to the highest standard of training in digital and social media. Emma also speaks at a number of conferences and events, including the Social Media Conference for Wales.

### **Gareth Rees**

Gareth is a Software Developer at mySociety. He is currently working on Alaveteli – an open-source platform

for making public Freedom of Information requests. He worked on applications for Box UK, World Vision, Cardiff University Students' Union, The Wales Trades Union Congress and Havering Fabian Society. He founded and runs cardiffrb, a monthly meet up for Ruby programmers in Cardiff. He also created Cardiff Collective as a place for entrepreneurs in Cardiff to connect and share knowledge and works with Sam Knight to open Welsh politics with Your Senedd.

### **Iain Tweedale**

Iain is a director of Tramshed Tech, the new hub for the creative industries in Cardiff which brings together the entertainment and technology sectors. Before that he was Head of Online & Learning at BBC Wales, Head of Business Development for a Scandinavian mobile content company and he was a lead consultant in the ISP & Portal Consulting team for IBM in Europe.

### **Andy Williamson**

Dr Andy Williamson works globally to support democratic innovation and effective civic participation. He works with a wide range of public bodies, such as the UN, the European Commission and the parliaments of the UK, Chile, Moldova and Serbia. Andy is author of the 2016 World e-Parliament Report and the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Social Media Guidelines for Parliaments and is a member of the UK Open Government Partnership Steering Group. Andy is the Founder and CEO of Democratise and a Governor of The Democratic Society.

## ANNEX 3: SENEDD LAB OVERVIEW

Senedd Lab was the Assembly's inaugural hack day. The free 24 hour event focused on discussing, sharing and bringing ideas to life that would help to change the future of democratic culture in Wales. The event took place on the evening of Friday 24 March and during the day on Saturday 25 March. Ahead of the event a number of the Assembly's existing data sources were promoted to attendees.

Following an unconference format, attendees were invited to pitch proposals against the event brief and then groups formed to work on projects which were to be presented to the judging panel made up of Taskforce members, a representative from Microsoft and senior Assembly staff. Throughout the second day, drop in talks were held by a variety of Assembly staff in order to provide context to the way that the Assembly works and some of the challenges currently being faced. Brief talks were also given by representatives from Microsoft and members of the Taskforce.

### RESULTS:

**Over 30 people attended the event (excluding Assembly staff) from a range of backgrounds. Three projects were presented to the panel at the end of the second day.**

**Conversations with attendees and the presentations revealed a number of key learning points which can be adopted by the Assembly in order to improve the way that they engage with both the wider public and with tech and digital professionals. These findings include:**

The existing data sets made available by the Assembly aren't promoted enough. More effort needs to go in to making these sets more visible and also providing context around how they can be used.

The Assembly's website needs to be redesigned so that it more clearly explains what it does and why it matters to people's day to day lives.

Inconstancies with the way that data and content is presented online creates barriers to finding and using information.

The Assembly needs to be clearer about how people can get involved and what to expect if you do want to get involved.

Make better use of video to communicate messages. Their authenticity matters more than the being of broadcast quality.

The Assembly needs to give more consideration to making content more accessible to a wide range of people, including those with cognitive impairments.

This is the people's Assembly so it needs to focus on the people to make it more accessible, relatable and connectable.

Visual representation of data is important to make it more attractive and engaging.



There's not many countries that allow you to access this kind of data and then readily invite you in to their home to play with their data and see what you can do – it's been amazing to work with the team and see what we can build.







”

**Speaking as someone who doesn't have any tech ability, just ideas and the will to talk to people, I've found that the Assembly today has been so open and giving, and so willing to make sure that everything is open for us – not just data but people and the physical building – everyone's experiences has been so enlightening, for example before today I didn't feel particularly engaged in the Senedd and what the Senedd does but now I feel like I've got a better understanding of what you do, who does it, why you do it and actually how the public can be engaged in that – I'm a member of the public and I feel more engaged.**

”



# ANNEX 4: CASE STUDIES

## Raising awareness of the Assembly through placing the emphasis on the people of Wales

To mark St David’s Day 2017, the National Assembly for Wales wanted to run a bilingual, multi-platform campaign that would celebrate national pride whilst also reinforcing the Assembly as central to Welsh life.

The concept behind the ‘Wales in your Words’ campaign was to demonstrate that the Assembly represents all voices in Wales and to focus the attention on the people of Wales rather than on the Assembly itself.

Campaign contributions were collected from visitors to the Senedd and through going out and visiting people in their communities. We wanted to create a campaign that was representative of modern Wales and so collected words in Welsh, English, Gujarati, Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Chinese and Punjabi. Rather than being solely focused on online or offline, the campaign was weaved throughout the Assembly’s channels including press releases, social media, printed material and events on the estate to provide a true OmniChannel approach.

### ASSETS PRODUCED AS PART OF THE CAMPAIGN:

- Text art made up of over 160 unique words that describe Wales. This was then used as a poster in the Senedd, set of postcards given away in the Senedd, Facebook and Twitter channel header images, and social graphics.
- Video (distributed on YouTube and natively through Twitter, Facebook and Instagram).
- Explainer blog post, read by 303 people in 24 hours (Welsh and English combined figure).

### CAMPAIGN RESULTS:

- The total promotional cost for the campaign was £20 which was spent on Facebook adverts. In the first 24 hours:
- 19,955 people watched our videos across all our digital platforms;
  - As a whole, we reached 87,878 users and were part of 82 online conversations; and
  - The blog post was read by 303 people.

# Targeting campaigns to reach audiences engaged with specific issues

In order to promote an inquiry into the Rail Franchise and the South Wales Metro by the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, the Communications team developed a digital campaign that targeted audiences in areas and during times when they would be most susceptible to the issue. To maximise this approach we used messaging that would most likely relate to their experience during the time they saw the campaign.

The Twitter element of the campaign was focused around commuting times and key external factors (for example to coincide with the Six Nations). On Facebook they targeted geographic areas based on the stops of each major train lines in Wales. Animated banner adverts were produced and placed on the Assembly's blog.

To support the campaign and to promote the inquiry further, a video interview with Russell George AM (the Committee Chair) was produced, the video was filmed on a train to provide further content for Facebook.

## ASSETS PRODUCED AS PART OF THE CAMPAIGN:

- Animations tailored to a range of locations and audiences; and
- Video featuring Committee Chair.

## CAMPAIGN RESULTS:

The total promotional cost for the campaign was £500 which was spent on Facebook adverts.

For the total duration of the campaign (10 days):

- Video:  
46,138 reach, 15,099 views, 264 link clicks
- Facebook:  
139,462 reach, 3,940 link clicks
- Twitter:  
362 link clicks



## Adopting appropriate digital innovation

Facebook Live was released to the public on 6 April 2016. Following some investigation, the Assembly's Communications team decided to adopt the platform as it offered a great opportunity for real time engagement (the public can ask questions and have them addressed in real time - therein helping to dispel the preconception that it's difficult to get your points of view in front of Assembly Members), it placed our content where people already were rather than expecting them to come to a different channel and the changes to the Facebook algorithm meant that Live videos were given a higher priority in feeds and therefore were likely to reach a wide audience.

The Assembly's first Facebook Live was held on 27 July 2016 - less than four months after the Live functionality was made publicly available by Facebook. The interview with Bethan Jenkins AM, Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communication Committee's was held in Welsh first through the Cynulliad Cymru Facebook page and then in English through the Assembly Wales Facebook page.

### RESULTS:

The total promotional cost for the campaign was £0. Within 15 hours of the broadcast, the videos combined had received:

- 1,744 unique views
- A reach of 6,161 people
- 113 reactions (105 likes, 8 loves) combined
- During and after the live feed, the channels saw a combined increase of 26 new page likes (an average day sees 5 - 10)

Feedback we received on the feed included:

- *'Great to see the Assembly on Facebook Live'*
- *'Good live feed, a great platform and as working full time useful to watch later - da iawn'*

The Assembly has since used Facebook live as part of events and to launch a number of committee consultations.

# Exploring new digital platforms

Snapchat is a social media platform based on imaging which send short-life images and video between users, with the potential to add filters and effects now being used by business and organisations as a marketing tool. As the fastest-growing and most-used social media platform amongst 12-24 year olds, with a 72% adoption rate Snapchat has more than 100 million users who send over 400 million ‘snaps’ a day.

The Assembly first used Snapchat to promote the 2016 Olympic Homecoming by releasing a custom filter geolocated around the Senedd, however further research was required to see if it was a viable platform for the Assembly to adopt in order to reach a millennial audience.

The Eisteddfod yr Urdd and UEFA Champions League Final Festival in May/June presented a good opportunity to further test the effectiveness of the platform and assess its potential for future use.

With an increased presence at the Eisteddfod yr Urdd in 2017 due to the Youth Parliament consultation, this was chosen as the focus for the Snapchat filter, which was available throughout the duration of the Eisteddfod and promoted on the stand.

As a way to promote the Senedd as being open to visitors during the UEFA Champions League Final Festival taking place in the Bay, the Assembly created a ‘Croeso’ Snapchat filter featuring Dewi the Dragon, who was dressed in a football kit. The filter was promoted on Instagram and ran across the four days of the festival.

## RESULTS:

### EISTEDDFOD YR URDD:

- Filter was used a total of 33 times
- It was seen (as an option to select) 1,108 times
- The total cost for the filter was £9
- It was ultimately viewed by 2,058 people, on average costing less than a penny per person reached

### UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL FESTIVAL:

- Filter was used 91 times
- It was seen (as an option to select) 806 times
- The cost for the filter was £65 for four days
- It was ultimately viewed by 5,039 people, averaging a cost of 1.2p per person reached

The difference in cost between UEFA and the Urdd is due to the location of the filter, which increases in a city setting or where there are several other filters being used.



# MySenedd

We operate in a fast changing, highly mobile and digital world that places growing demands on Assembly Members and makes democratic engagement ever more important and challenging. We aspire to be a world class parliament and to do that we need to make our information more open and available digitally.

Our vision is to ‘Connect and engage all the people of Wales with trusted parliamentary information whenever, however and wherever they choose’.

Becoming an open, digital parliament requires us to make the flow of information into, within and out of the Assembly as efficient and

effective as possible, offering choice, flexibility and ease of use to Members, staff and the public. We have recognised that we need to make a number of improvements to achieve this and the MySenedd programme has been established to co-ordinate related projects and activity.

Throughout the Fifth Assembly we will focus on making practical improvements annually, based on a good understanding of Members’ needs and those of the people of Wales, which will provide a much easier, more relevant, personalised and more satisfying experience for all of our users.

## RESULTS:

## EXAMPLES OF RE-DESIGNED SERVICES THAT ARE WELL UNDERWAY INCLUDE:

- **Tabling business:** making it simpler for Members and their staff to table business via a personalised on-line portal and making it easier for all to view, track and search Assembly business;
- **Record of Proceedings:** making it easier for everyone to search and share the Record and committee transcripts in a number of formats and through social media; and
- **Drafting and amending legislation:** improvement and replacement of the existing system.

Underpinned by an effective information management strategy, we propose to lay the digital foundations on which other improvements are made, such as overhauling our website. This should lead to better management and use of our data and information as well as more efficient work processes.



## ANNEX 5: WALES-BASED MEDIA SURVEY

---

As part of their research, the Taskforce conducted a survey with Wales- based journalists to find out how what information they would be interested in receiving from the Assembly and what packages and formats they would like to receive this information in.

Responses to the survey indicated that:

- Plenary debates and Welsh Government's work ranked highest in terms of relevance for audience/ readership, with 'public engagement initiatives happening in the local area' ranking as the least relevant;
- Receiving press releases is currently the most common way that journalists access the Assembly's information;
- The most important types of content/activity that journalists would like to see is a weekly update of what's coming up by subject, issue or geographic location, press releases and infographics, the least important being video packages with relevant local case studies, video clips with a local AM who sits on the committee and video clips of committee chairs;
- The website is used regularly by journalists whereas the Assembly's YouTube, Instagram and Flickr channels are rarely used;
- Emails are the preferred way to receive information but some would like this to be an alert when new content is added to the website;
- Desired content and information includes summaries of debates and proceedings which journalists can look in to in more detail if they're interested, longer lead-in times, more packages provided under embargo, weekly clip packages and an emailed list of debates and proceedings coming up next week.



