

Digital Inclusion Whanganui was founded in January 2025 by Alistair Fraser. Alistair has worked in the digital inclusion space for many years and is extremely concerned that the digital divide is getting wider than ever. Alistair has made Whanganui home for over 20 years and all of these has been working in the digital inclusion landscape.





Housekeeping

- **Location of amenities, toilets, emergency exits**
- **This session runs for around 50 minutes,**
- **Our second session restarts at 1pm**
- **Availability of information & materials**
- **Participation guidelines**

*One From Many: Visa and
the Rise of Chaordic
Organization*

Dee Hock, Berrett-
Koehler Publishers, 2005
[ISBN-10: 1-57675-332-8]

DIGITAL INCLUSION WHANGANUI 2025

*“It is far too late, and things are far too bad,
for pessimism.”*

DEE HOCK

This quote reminds us that we don't have the luxury of waiting or wishing things were different. The digital divide in Whanganui — and across Aotearoa — is real, urgent, and growing. But today, we choose action. Not because it's easy, but because it's necessary. This session is about stepping up — together — with courage, creativity, and hope.



Purpose of Presentation

- ✦ **Share key findings & Stimulate action**
- ✦ **Invite feedback to refine future plans and priorities**
- ✦ **Highlight the economic and social value of digital inclusion**
- ✦ **Align Alistair's mahi to be better focused and informed**
- ✦ **Support local leadership and collaborative partnerships**
- ✦ **Encourage others to use, share, or build upon this work**
- ✦ **Strengthen the case for a renewed digital strategy for Whanganui**
- ✦ **Inspire attendees to see themselves as part of the solution**



**Second
session this
afternoon
from 1 to 2
pm**

Open Discussion: What Comes Next?

After a short break, we'll explore future directions for Digital Inclusion Whanganui:

- **What could a steering group or governance structure look like?**
- **Which pilot projects should we prioritise first?**
- **How can we design this mahi together?**
- This second hour is flexible and interactive — bring your ideas and join a shared conversation. If time allows, we may also host a spontaneous panel discussion with community voices.



**"Facts do not cease to exist
because they are ignored."**

*— Aldous Huxley, Proper Studies
(1927)*

This is Huxley at his most direct.

We have the data. We know who is excluded,
where the gaps are, and what works to fix
them.

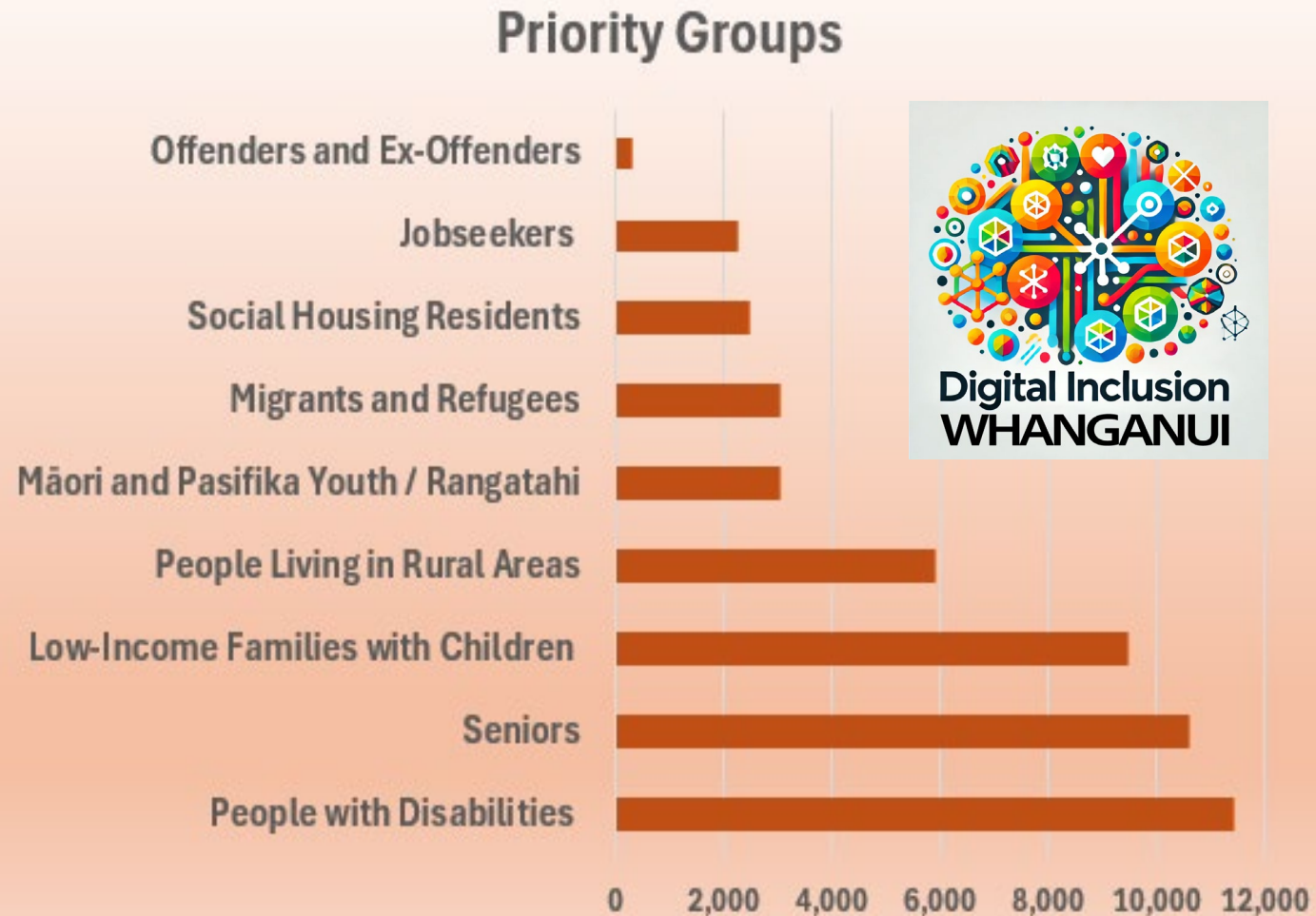
The question now is not whether the problem
exists — but whether we're prepared to act on
it.

This is a challenge to funders, to Council,
and to all of us: let's not ignore what's
plain to see. Let's respond with purpose.



Priority Demographic groups

Priority Groups - Estimates of total numbers in Whanganui each based on Census 2023	People	Percent
People with Disabilities	11,400	24%
Seniors	10,600	22%
Low-Income Families with Children	9,450	20%
People Living in Rural Areas	5,885	12%
Māori and Pasifika Youth / Rangatahi	3,000	6%
Migrants and Refugees	3,000	6%
Social Housing Residents	2,450	5%
Jobseekers	2,250	5%
Offenders and Ex-Offenders	300	1%
Total	48,335	100%



Barriers to Digital Inclusion

- **Affordability of Internet & Devices**
- **Lack of Skills & Confidence**
- **Low Motivation & Trust**
- **Unequal Connectivity (Urban vs Rural)**

These four barriers are seen across all priority groups in Whanganui.

Affordability: Even \$20/month is too much for some; families often share one device or rely on a phone only.

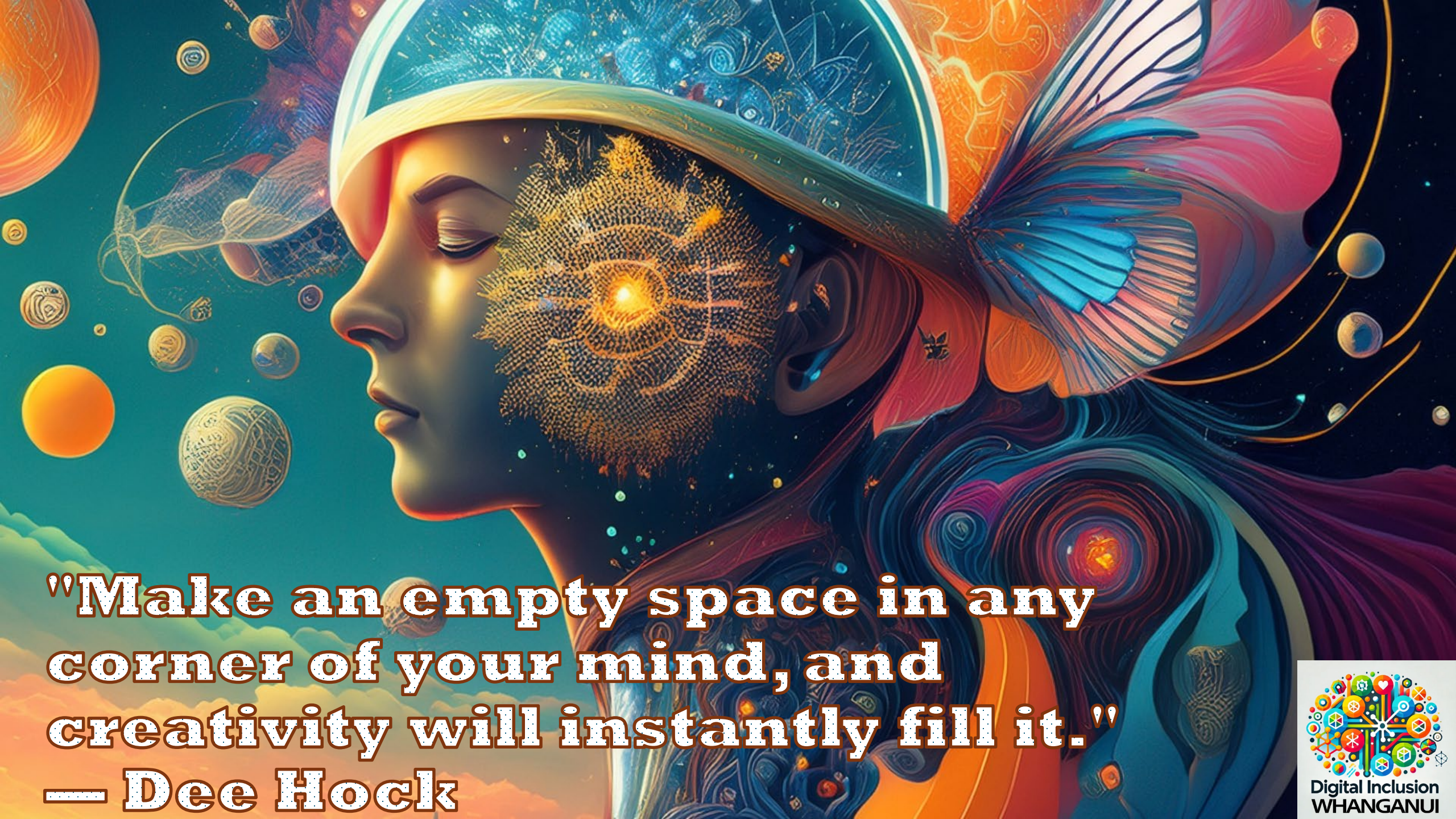
Skills & Confidence: Many don't know where to start, especially seniors, jobseekers, and low-income whānau.

Motivation & Trust: Fear of scams, bad past experiences, or feeling it's "not for them" reduce engagement.

Connectivity: 3,500 households remain unconnected to the internet. Rural residents still face patchy service or only expensive satellite options.



**Digital Inclusion
WHANGANUI**



"Make an empty space in any corner of your mind, and creativity will instantly fill it."

— Dee Hock



Digital Inclusion
WHANGANUI

Community Insights



- **17.9% of Whanganui households still lack internet access**
- **Seniors, rural residents, Māori & Pasifika face deep digital skills gaps**
- **Strong demand for practical, localised digital training**

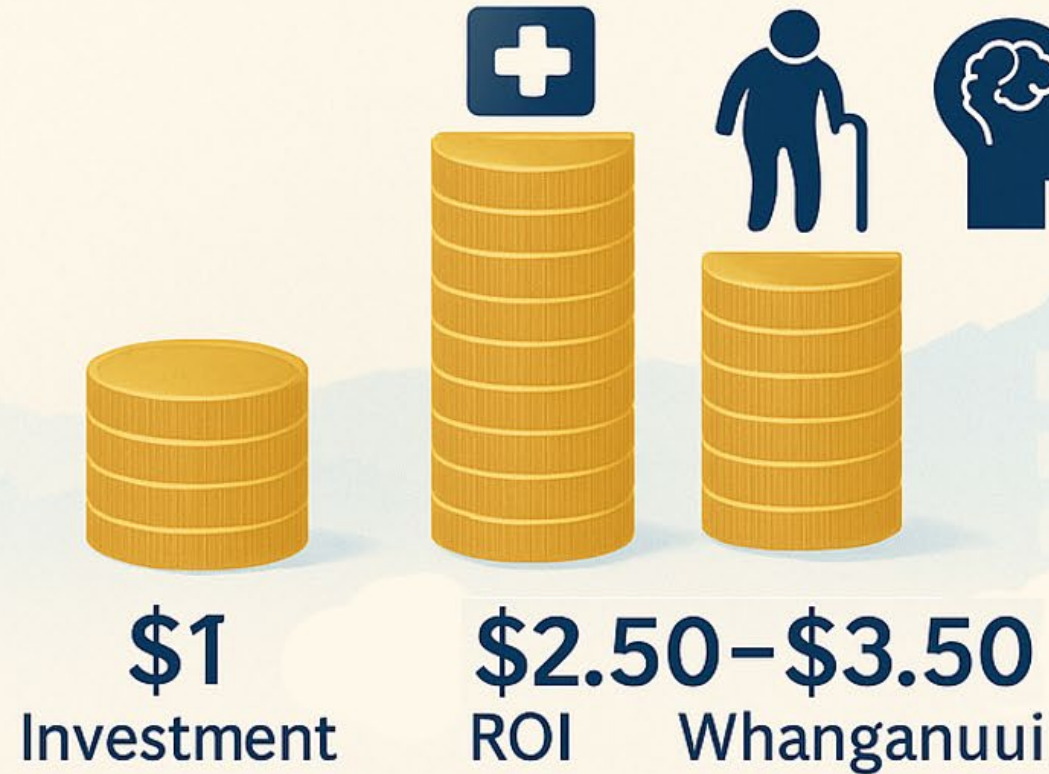
These findings are based on 2023 Census data and local engagement.

1 in 6 homes still without internet — that's thousands missing out on essential services.

Older adults, Māori, and rural whānau tell us they want help — but it must feel safe, useful, and close to home.

This confirms the need for trusted, everyday digital support — in libraries, health centres, and community hubs.

Why It Pays to Act Now



\$10–15 million in annual local benefits

Inclusion = Jobs, Health Savings, Participation

Community Voices

- "Finally seeing my mokopuna on Zoom."
— Library
- "First place I didn't feel dumb asking a question."
— Learning Centre
- "Without support, wouldn't have known where to start."
— People's Centre



*The stories are powerful but **the other real story** is each of these organisations are struggling because **they do not have enough money and time** to satisfy increasing demand for people needing help*

**"The secret of genius
is to carry the spirit of
the child into old age,
which means never
losing your
enthusiasm."
— *Aldous Huxley***



Strategic Recommendations (For Techweek Audience)



- **Leadership through a dedicated Digital Equity Strategy**
 - **Partnerships between community, iwi, and business**
 - **Support for trusted local groups already doing the mahi**
- **Leadership:** A strategy focused on digital inclusion gives us clarity, alignment, and momentum. Whanganui is ready to lead — but we need a shared direction.
 - **Partnerships:** No single group can do this alone. Success comes from collaboration — community groups, iwi, education providers, tech experts, and yes, local government.
 - **Grassroots Power:** The most impactful digital support often comes from small, trusted, familiar spaces — libraries, whānau organisations, community hubs. Let's invest there.

Practical Immediate Steps



- **Align community work with digital inclusion goals**
 - **Pilot affordable device + internet access (like Digits Palmerston North)**
 - **Build digital health confidence in libraries, clinics, and homes**
- These are **three things Whanganui could act on immediately** — practical, proven, and scalable.
 - **Alignment:** If organisations add a digital inclusion lens to what they're already doing — youth work, housing, health — we can lift digital equity everywhere.
 - **Devices + Connectivity:** Models like *Digits Palmerston North* show how \$5/week devices, supported internet, and local training make a huge difference.
 - **Digital Health:** Many struggle to use patient portals or find trusted health info online. Libraries, GPs, and pharmacies can become safe entry points for learning.

"Given the right circumstances, from no more than dreams, determination, and the liberty to try, quite ordinary people consistently do extraordinary things."

— *Dee Hock*

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- This speaks directly to what we're seeing in Whanganui — ordinary people stepping up to do extraordinary things with digital support.
 - Volunteers refurbishing devices. Seniors learning Zoom at the library. Youth running digital storytelling workshops.
 - If we create the right environment — safe, inclusive, encouraging — people *will* rise to it.

Let's focus not just on deficits but on possibilities.





Pilot Initiatives

- **Drop-in Clinics – Free, friendly help with digital basics**
 - **Mobile Tech Hubs – Outreach to rural & isolated communities**
 - **Creative Makerspaces – Youth-led innovation & digital creativity**
- These are not theoretical — each of these has been trialled elsewhere and works.
 - Drop-in Clinics: No booking, no pressure — just “come in and ask anything.” Libraries and community houses are perfect for this.
 - Mobile Tech Hubs: Take support to rural marae, social housing blocks, schools. No one gets left out because of location.



"Experience is not what happens to you; it's what you do with what happens to you."
— *Aldous Huxley*

Digital exclusion has “happened” to many in Whanganui — not by choice, but by system gaps, cost, or confidence.

The real measure is what we now *do* about it — as a community.

This Techweek session, this report, these pilots — they’re our way of turning experience into action.

Huxley reminds us: transformation isn’t passive — it’s something we choose, together.



Interactive Q&A

- Questions, Reflections, Ideas?

Let's make the most of this opportunity, please provide your thoughts, not just questions

What excites you most about this?"

"Do you see new partnership possibilities in your mahi?"

"How could we bring these ideas to life together?"

This isn't one-off presentation — it's the start of an ongoing conversation.

Call to Action & Closing



Join us in making digital inclusion
a reality for Whanganui.

Every action, every connection
counts.

Let's create something
extraordinary together.

Digital inclusion is not a tech
project — it's a people project.

- You are invited to:
 - Connect with DIW
 - Share the Needs Analysis
 - Support a pilot
 - Start something small in your own communities

"There is only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self."

*— Aldous Huxley,
Time Must Have a Stop
(1944)*

- This speaks to the heart of digital inclusion. We often talk about systems, policies, and infrastructure — but real change starts with people. The courage to try something new. The patience to learn. The kindness to help someone else. In Whanganui, we've seen that it's often the smallest acts — a volunteer showing someone how to use a phone, a grandparent joining Zoom — that ripple outward into real transformation.