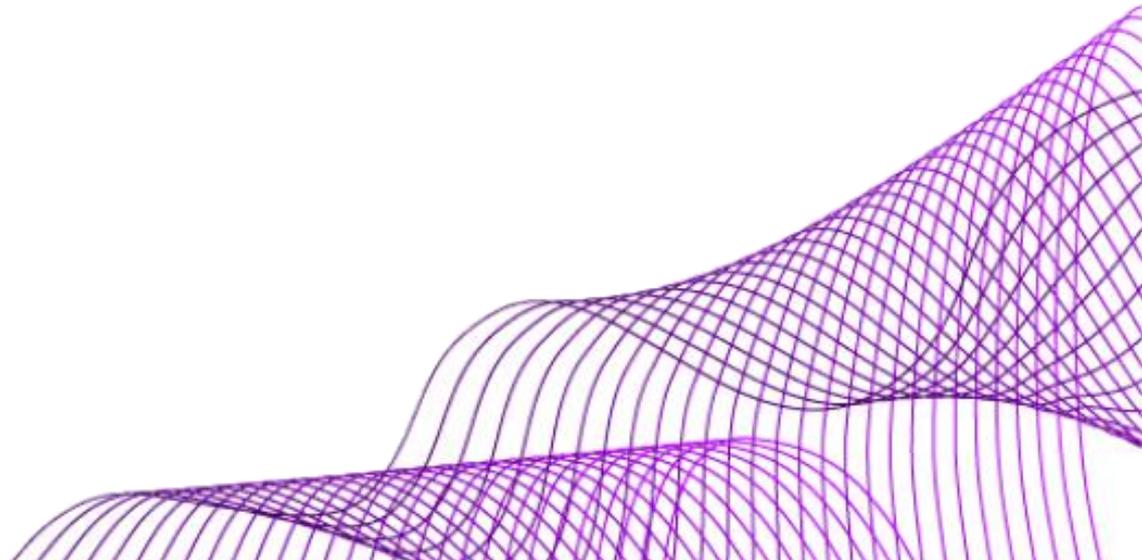




# **INNOVATION WITHOUT LIMITS AT DWP DIGITAL**



# TAKING THE BRAKES OFF CREATIVITY

For government agencies like the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in the UK, the pressure to transform keeps on growing. That's partly driven by the rate of technology change and it's also a result of citizens' expectations for digital services and experiences that are as user-friendly, responsive and adaptable as those they receive from their countless other interactions in the digital world.

To respond, DWP has to innovate. Traditionally in government, trying new ideas is challenging. There are complex governance procedures to observe and spending public money on experimentation is discouraged without a lengthy process of business case development and approval. But in today's fast-paced world of rapidly evolving technology, successful innovation requires a different approach. One that encourages out-of-the-box thinking, rapid testing and learning from failure to develop new solutions.

Innovation requires much more than a focus on new technology. For all of DWP, but particularly the Digital arm of the organisation, it's about radically rethinking how to design and deliver great services to citizens. The aim is to go beyond incremental improvements, to delight citizens – and all other stakeholders – with new experiences that can be scaled.

But finding the space and time to innovate is tough. That's why DWP Digital and Accenture have together created a new, dedicated place for innovation: The Innovation Dojo.

## **The Innovation Dojo – a space for transformational thinking**

The Innovation Dojo is a place for transformational change. It sets ambitious goals. It's where DWP Digital's people can radically rethink how they design and deliver new experiences. And it's a 'safe' space – where even the most far-fetched idea is not just tolerated, it's positively encouraged. The Innovation Dojo is a space for immersive learning where Accenture and DWP Digital get together to collaborate and co-create the solutions that will enable the organisation to transform the experiences it offers to citizens.

# 16+ 15+ 9

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DWP business areas involved in the Innovation Dojo including Payments, Digital Technology, Identity & Trust, Business Strategy and Health Transformation.

New technologies experimented with including blockchain, natural language processing, virtual assistants, machine learning, real-time trust scoring, facial recognition, and virtual/augmented reality.

Start-ups have partnered with the Innovation Dojo team to bring solutions to life.

## **So how does it work in practice?**

Small groups gather to look at a particular problem or opportunity. Everyone is encouraged to contribute their ideas – no matter how ‘out there’ they are – and those ideas are then narrowed down by the group. The ‘fail-fast’ mentality is crucial: no-one is going to be penalised for an idea that doesn’t pan out, as long as lessons are learned from experimenting.

The Innovation Dojo harnesses a cloud-first approach, using modern engineering practices and new ways of working. By working in small, focused teams, development work is rapid and iterative, with daily stand-ups and weekly reviews and retrospectives that push the pace of innovation forward and encourages continuous improvement. Teams with diverse backgrounds enable the cross-fertilisation of skills and the agility of a small team means decisions are made quickly without the need to rely on traditional hierarchy. The journey of a project in the Innovation Dojo follows a 12-week cycle – from initial ideas to proofs of concept that can be further tested and eventually trialled at scale.

# EMBEDDING A CULTURE OF INNOVATION

While the Innovation Dojo aims to harness the potential of new technology, its projects always start with the needs of the citizen. Design thinking enables team members to adopt a citizen-centric approach, developing a deep understanding of how services are experienced from the citizen's perspective and how technology can enable the best outcomes. And that new thinking isn't confined to the Dojo. When DWP Digital's people rotate back to their projects they take with them the new approaches that they have learned – and that's helping to diffuse a culture of innovation throughout the organisation.

## Real outcomes

In total, the Innovation Dojo has completed five proofs of concepts, with over 16 of the DWP's business areas included in their development including Payments, Operations, Contact Centres, Identity and Trust, Fraud and Error, Health Transformation and Labour Market.

**50%**      **11**      **63**

Conversion rate of proof-of-concepts from the Innovation Dojo being handed over the DWP for further work.

DWP employees have rotated through the Innovation Dojo, returning to their teams with fresh ways of looking at existing business problems.

Iterations where the team have evolved and further developed the propositions created in the Innovation Dojo.

The Innovation Dojo has created exciting new solutions with potential to transform citizen experiences. One is a blockchain payment solution. The DWP is one of the largest participants in the UK banking system, handling in excess

of £170 billion in payments each year. The Innovation Dojo team has identified a new and more efficient way to make payments based on blockchain technology that can be used within a network of financial institutions to provide real-time messaging, enabling both lower costs for transactions and faster payments to citizens. Another development is looking at how artificial intelligence can streamline transactional, repetitive processes to enable DWP's people to focus their time on handling cases that need more detailed and personal attention.

These ideas are just the start. The Innovation Dojo has quickly evolved from a concept to becoming the established way that DWP Digital is addressing the development of breakthrough innovations. It's also now catching the attention of other government departments. They're seeing how it's possible – through modern delivery methods and rethinking the potential of new technology – to deliver a world class experience for citizens.

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