InTransition Episode 31 – Sarah Lay

David: Hello ladies and gentleman. My name's David Pembroke and thanks once again to all of you for joining me InTransition. The podcast dedicated to the practice of content marketing in government. I'm pleased to be with you once again as we bring you the insights and wisdom of some of the most interesting people in the world of content marketing in government.

Today, we head back to the United Kingdom to talk to one of their most decorated local government communicators. But before we do that, it's time for definition.

Content marketing is a strategic and measurable business process that relays on the curation, creation and distribution of valuable, relevant and consistent content to engage and inform a clearly defined audience with the objective of driving a desired citizen or stakeholder action.

My guest this week is Sarah Lay. Sarah is the senior digital officer at Nottinghamshire Council and co-founder of the digital practitioner network, LocalGov Digital where she is currently the communication's lead.

At the Nottinghamshire County Council, her work involves both strategy and delivery of digital services and she's currently the Council's Digital First project officer. The project includes a new website, delivery of a social media strategy, work across microsites and extranets and delivery of an internet and employee engagement tools. These roles and her previous experiences led her to be included in the local government shortlist for the Digital by Default News Digital Leaders 100 awards in 2014.

Additionally, her roles have covered content management, to research and statistical analysis, use of centred-design techniques and digital engagement so very qualified to be a guest on this humble podcast. Sarah thanks for joining us InTransition.

Sarah: Thanks David, nice to be here.

David: Sarah, I'm intrigued that you like many communicators around the world and now heavily involved in the digital first projects traditionally, perhaps the work of the ICT area, but increasingly seeming to fall to the communicators. Why is that?

Sarah: Yes, quite an interesting question actually. I think for us here in Nottinghamshire and for me personally it's because technology is the second part of the equation. It's really about having a customer-centric, ease-centric approach and understanding what people want to do, sometimes what you want to drive people to do and then finding the technology that supports that rather than looking at the solution first.

David: How widespread is that notion of customer's centricity or citizen's centricity established now in the UK?

Sarah: I think the government digital service with what they do towards gov.uk over the last few years and they've really helped to embed that sort of thinking and it's still not as widespread as perhaps it could be, but certainly as an emerging approach to have to do digital in the UK.

David: What are some of the successes that they've had in being able to propagate that notion of user first? How is it that they've been able to get that message out and get it adopted?

Sarah: I think of '.UK' we're mandated within central government here in the UK to make that change and take that approach, to really question the way the central government departments were approaching digital projects and delivering those and to change the philosophy within central government. So they had a very strong remake to do that and we're really able to room with that. And by working in very open way, by sharing their thought processes, sharing that resources, sharing what went, as well as things that didn't go as well as they perhaps hoped they would.

Then local government has been able to picked that up and people like myself who want to drive a change or working within digital and local government have been able to sought sign post and leadership to that and give them some reassurance that actually changing the way that we do things, that's quite brave but there are other people going first.

David: In terms of how you've actually then implemented that on the ground, can you give us some insights into some of your processes as to how you are working through this citizen first approach and how you are developing that Digital First project?

Sarah: Sure. Digital First is a two-year project here at the council. We're just about a year into it now. The speed of local government means that probably most

councils were just used to tackle one or perhaps two of the work streams that we're doing at the moment and we look at it very much as an acceleration program so we're tackling all of the work streams at the same time.

We've really taken a customer-centric approach to that. Work is focused at the moment on the re-launch of Nottinghamshire.gov.uk which is the council's main sits and facing website.

Now, a year ago, we took quite a harsh look at that and realized that the savings that a council needs to make within a service is open the next couple of years, won't go and be achieve through moving people to digital services because they couldn't access a lot of our services online and why they could experience was pretty poor. The website doesn't work on mobiles or tablets for example and we know that 50% of our traffic every month comes from those devices.

To make those savings and to increase the customer's satisfaction, then we knew we had to do something. And that really played across the other work streams that we're looking as well in terms of our internet, the extranets of the councils gotten micro sized and also a social media approach. So, we took a step back and we started actually a program of talking to sets in specifically about what they wanted, understanding quite a lot of user research into who was already using our website, who was using our other contact channels such as our customer contact centre, why would they ringing, why weren't trying things online, have they tried something can abandoned it.

From this we started to grow a picture of really who are you since we're beyond the so typical frozen local government, is there a council's audiences, everybody and not geographical area but of course it breaks down into more specific audiences with more specific needs. So we started to get that really in depth understanding of who is using our website or who could potentially be using our website if we could make it better for them. Through the process of designing it then again, we kept going back to uses to understand whether what we're building is working for them, what could be changing, what could be better.

They started with rather than just come out with one design. We created three working design prototypes for our new website. Quite small scale of prototypes but with functionality and now we could use some observational lab testing with our users, with our customer say that we could ask them to go through a number of scenarios ,see which element of which prototypes work for them, where they got confused, where they got lost, where it didn't just worked at all. From that

we merged the best bits of all three of the prototypes into what became into our beta side.

Again, in local government I think we did something quite unusual. We went into public beta for about a 100 days before we were due to go live with the site so we've designed very openly, very transparently. We've actively sought feedback from our customers but also our peers across local government and other industries so that throughout this beta period, we're really just iterating by the day by day basis to hopefully make the site as good as it can be comes September when it becomes the official website of the council.

David: And how's that going?

Sarah: It's going pretty well. We're about half way through that beta phase now. I guess we've got about 45 days until September. So yeah, we've made plenty of changes already whether that's the design or adding functionality, tweaking the content.

The site that we're moving from was about 30,000 pages in size which even in Nottinghamshire County Council has about 500 services. It's still a huge and unwieldy site. We're really consolidating all of that information into what needs to be there.

For the first time services has been as not only been about what's the organisational need for this piece of content or this transaction, but who the user is and what their needs are. And they need to answer both parts of that question with our help, with our support so that we can build the best content possible and the best journey through the sites.

We're really looking at every word on that website just to find its reason for being there. It's not helping somebody to understand or move through a journey than it probably doesn't need to be down. We can cut down even further and really make the content as tight as possible so we can get people through in an efficient way.

David: From the beginning of the process to the stage where you are now, what have been the biggest surprises to you?

Sarah: That's a good question. I think it's been a really lovely atmosphere to work in here at the council. It's a quite unusual I think in local government to have everything he need going for a project like this. Actually going for you say

support from the leadership all the way through the organisation, budget available from that transformation and pot of money that if we need it we can put some money into this project as well and the right scales in house.

At the start of the project, we did take a view as do we go external to the council and buy an expertise in terms of going to our content management system provider or design each and see we'll do in invest in scales in house and we took that in house. We say that hopefully through the life of the project, we can start to embed some of this thinking and throughout the organisation around customer centric behaviour and use a design technique so that even after the project's finish, hopefully that mind-set is sustainable within the organisation.

It's been really lovely how many services have really gone through about and not just sort of trying to stick with what they know and fall into that comfort zone of, "Our work pages working for us. We don't want it to change." They've been very open to us coming in as a team and sort of suggesting different ways of doing things and sometimes asking quite difficult questions for them to answer about their service and who they're delivering to and the ways that they are delivering it. Some of those questions start to go beyond digital and to service design and delivery. It's been really nice that we've got that in our remake that we can ask those questions and trigger those conversations within the organisation.

David: But even going back to that beginning where you started the process, it sounds to me like it was no accident that you have engendered this level of support. So what did you do in terms of building that support within the council? What were some of the things which you did to get people ready for what is essentially is a massive change in the way that communicate with their particular audiences?

Sarah: We spent quite a lot of time before the project officially kicked off probably around about six to eight months. We're actually having lot of conversations within the organisation and aligning different departments and different bits of the organisation with the vision for the digital that we had. And providing quite a lot of evidence about the organisation as well in terms of what the website or the digital channels weren't achieving at that time and the possibilities of what they could achieve and how that match with the strategic claims of the organisation.

But we spent quite a lot of time talking with IT departments here and with our HR department. They look after our customer service centre for example and actually making sure that we were all align to the same vision so that we went

and talk to the leadership team or we talk to our elected members. The council is here, then we had a very consistent view of what the evidence would covered meant and how that would fit in to the journey that the council is about to go on.

Then we supported that as well with external experts if you like. We had a guy called Carl Haggerty; he's the other co-founder of LocalGov Digital. He does a very similar role at Doven County Council here and he was willing to go further along the journey than we were.

So he was able to come in and again, gave us some of those reinsurances and ignites some of that fire within the teams here that this change is not always easy. It's not always the easy thing to do but it's the right thing to do. Doven were seeing returns on that efforts and the Nottinghamshire could see that too.

We really took a kind of mixed approach in terms of what we did internally and then validating that, supporting it with external people as well. I think Nottinghamshire in a lot of ways was just ready for it. With the budget situation and the changing shape of the council in terms of the way that we managed some of our services, everything just came together at the right time for us to actually look at the digital platforms, the digital state as we make that change.

David: What some of your advice to people as they start down this journey? Because I think many people listen to this podcast all over the world who were in exactly the same position that you were. Perhaps a few months ago some are into the process, some haven't started.

What is just some really key advice that you could give people to perhaps avoid some of the mind shafts and landmines you might have stepped on along the way?

Sarah: Yeah. I think evidence gathering and having a look around, that could be within your local sector, within your region, within your country. We look to globally as well at what was going on around the world.

Have a look at who else is already on this journey and it might not just be within government. For us, we looked at other sectors as well and whether that's the sort of voluntary sector and health agencies. Everyone's organized in a slightly different way across the world but there some really good examples out there of where people have started parts of this journey even if it's not the whole thing that you're hoping to do then there's usually some evidence and learning.

What I found is that most of the time people who work in the government sector are really happy to talk about what they've done and they're even more happy to share the things that didn't go that well. So it's kind of nice sector to work in that way. Everybody is looking to help support success and then learn from it again themselves rather than leave you out there exposed to fail on your own.

But I think it's really important to my personal view perhaps the expertise in house and have that supported by the organisation not to use that expertise straight away. But to continue to learn as they go along through a project and bring in different thinking, try different things, and really to encourage your organisations and encourage your team and your individuals to be brave with what you're doing. It is public money that we're spending.

We have to be careful that we're spending it in the right way and we're not being wasteful or we're not putting it into the wrong places. But by gathering the right evidence, by gathering this information from those who've gone before you, you can make sensible decisions about any budget that you got and you can try anything at the same time and push everybody forward.

I think my main advice is to talk to lots of people and be brave.

David: So comes September when it's now live, how much of that new sort of platform ecosystem will be ready to go? You got the new website, the new social media strategy, the microsites, the extranets, the internet, the employment engagement tools. It's a fair sweet of a new platform that you're going to be operating from.

How much of it is going to be ready and how much of it is okay with just a bit of good to go, let's go because we know that probably in three months' time, six months' time we're going to have to be changing and continuing to change?

Sarah: Yeah. This is very much a program of continuous iteration for us. Digital First is an acceleration program to get us closer to where we know we need to be. From there, we'll just be constantly building on it from what people tell us about their experience.

So come September, the websites will switch over and we'll have a new website. There still be work to do online in terms of a lot of our key customer journey, we wanted to not just do a better digital delivery of those but look at the end to end process within the organisation so that's offline bits of that. Bits that take part in the telephone channel and make sure that it all links up.

Wherever the customer comes into that journey, whichever touch points they have as they go along, however they come out at the either end, hopefully it's a joined up journey of equal experience whichever channel they're in. So they'll be still work going on and a lot of those customer journeys that will undoubtedly be bits of functionality and bits of content that still need tweaking by. I think the website will be pretty much there at general level, certainly enough that it can be our official channel and people aren't missing information or seeing bits that obviously unfinished.

Social media strategy we'll deliver along the same timelines. And again, we already have, we already used social media here. So what we're really doing is just realigning our social media so it takes a little bit less tactical in terms of the way it's all organically grown over the last four or five years and is more aligned with the strategic claims of the rest our digital channel and the organisation as a whole.

The extranets and the internet deliver slightly later. So we haven't done huge amount of works on those yet. That will be what the team start concentrating on post September until around about May next year when the project winds up.

There will still be plenty of work happening in terms of build-time and testing. And then from there, I think it will just be this testing, iterating cycle. We'll just become business as usual. That will just be what the team does at that point.

And we won't stand still. We don't want to get to a situation which is perhaps a traditional way of doing things where you do big build-phase and you have a big bang launch for website and then you sit back for two or three years, maintaining it and managing it but not really developing it and then you realized you have to go through the whole design process again. We really just want to keep it flowing and day to day, week to week, in line with changing customer behaviour, their changing needs, changing shape of the council, changing shape of the local government in the UK. This all kinds of factors that make continuous iteration make sense to us.

David: Now, obviously a key part of driving that behavioural change, achieving the engagement that you are going to need to achieve to make those changes. Content sits at the heart of that. Can you explain just exactly what your content creation and curation process looks like now that you're going to have the platform built? You've obviously done an enormous amount of user research which is by the sounds of things, going to be on-going. But how do you translate

all of those insights into a content marketing program that you are now going to be able to sustain overtime?

Sarah: The process that we've got here is that our team is quite heavily resourced in terms of ratios within the team with content experts. That's there sort of bread and butter to their background expertise. They take all of that user research and they talk to our service areas, who obviously have the service-delivery expertise in terms of whose eligible, how is the service delivered, turnaround time strategy outsourcing service and that kind of thing.

They have those conversations with them and really trying to the heart of what is the organisation need, what is the user need, who is the user at the end of this. And then put that together into a page or page of content that really flow through that journey.

David: Sorry to interrupt you there. But are they journalistic skills or are they policy people skill or what sort of skills are those people who are creating that content?

Sarah: I would say that they are from sort of journalism, PR communications type backgrounds, and marketing type backgrounds. So that kind of copywriter type expertise, mix them with a lot of experience in digital channels in terms of understanding usability and accessibility. Not in a very in depth way but on a light level things like interaction, design and visual design. We do you have those experts within the team as well to support that knowledge. But everybody has that kind of overview of how things work within the digital channel.

So they put scattered the page or page of content and then they do that testing to say, "Okay. Well, these are the words that we've started with. Let's see how people use that." So we generate hit maps of where people are clicking or mouse scrolling along the screen. We capture little videos of how people are using those pages.

We gather feedback from people we've actually been through it. We talk to people. We post it no test, all kinds of stuff to make sure that wherever the starting point is that we push it a few iterations forward and then have those conversations again with the service as well to make sure that it's factually correct.

It may be radically different from what they've got at the moment. On the current side, we've seen scenarios go from 20 plus pages down to a single page because the rest of the information just didn't actually need to be there. It's like I

see content that needed to be deleted, it just haven't been managed, all kinds of reason. I'm sure how these things grow overtime.

We've seen quite a lot of consolidation. Obviously, that's quite a shock to the system for some services. But actually understanding how we got to that point and seeing the evidence gives some that reassurance that actually that's okay. It's okay to go from 20 plus pages to 1 page if the information in that page is the thing that your service area needs to tell people and it's what people are actually looking for.

David: But do you have any sort of any future idea around sort of the editorial mix of your team that's going to be required or is it really just going to fluid and you're going to move as required. Some areas may not require any sort or updating, other areas are going to require a lot of movement, a lot of updating, a lot of change and so therefore, without the site being live, you don't really know yet.

Sarah: Yeah. I think there's a certain element of unknown in our content governance approach. What we have here in the moment and have them for the last for years even before digital first is a centralised team within the organisation and of content office. So any changes to website, internet content would come through that centralised team and be done on behalf of the services.

I don't see us moving away from that model immediately because we will have that period of working out, how much is there to manage, the frequency of updates, the type of updates and all of that kind of things. I think we will go through that period and understand a little bit more and then reconsider our content governance model. It may be that we want to devolve the authorship slightly back to services or move to our hope and spoke method where they're more supported but have access to meet direct changes in some parts of the organisation.

I think that really fits into the bigger picture within the organisation as well in terms of other sites that we're managing, the extranets, the internet, but also our social media approach as well. We really want to move to a create ones publish everywhere model where we're not duplicating a lot of the effort but we're creating based content which is sort of where the digital first phrase came from really is that if we can get it right to the digital channel, then we can build blocks on top of it for other channels or for other users so that we can tweak the content to make it more visual for example for social media.

We can add more detail to quotes or information if it was going out as press release or our traditional media. We can deliver in all kinds of different ways but if we can get the digital channels right that's our foundation level and then we'll tweak and publish elsewhere in appropriate ways.

David: You said that you got or you're quite happy with the resourcing that you've got their in terms of your team. Can you give us some sort of indication as to what that team looks like and what sort of skills are covered by the people that you have on your team?

Sarah: Yeah, sure. We have a big project team at the moment which is just fixed term within the council for Digital First. There are a couple of permanent members of staff but the majority of people are fixed term contracts.

What we've got in the moment are three senior digital officers of which I'm one. We've been working mostly in Digital for quite a long time now. For myself, about 15 years in public and private sector and background in journalism. That's the way that I train and came through the digital world that way.

We've then got a number of [I'm just trying to count up in head quickly] about seven digital content officers, who are these content specialist I spoke about. They do elements of that user research and training, they look at our analytics, they manage our social media profiles day to day as well. So they've really got the overview content across other channels.

We then have two digital design officers who look at the interaction and the visual design. They do the creative and then they do the sort of CSS and HTML type coding.

And then, outside of the team but within the organisation, there are frontend developers as well. We work quite closely with them and they support our content management systems. We've just moved to an open source system called Umbraco. They support that and do the programming around where perhaps look up bringing an APIs and all of that kind of thing.

Then other people that we work a lot with are our customer service centre. They have development officers down there. Obviously looking at this process design within the council with a specific focus on telephone channel but more broadly on what the customer needs. So we work with them a lot as well.

There's a direct digital delivery team and then there's the supporting functions around the organisation as well that we've tap into.

David: Post the conclusion of the project in an around September or perhaps a couple of months after that. What will that on-going team look like?

Sarah: I don't know. It's the honest answer. Digital First funding runs up until May next year which is when the Internet is due to be delivered. So we're really looking at the moment and starting that process now.

We're considering and what would a digital resource look like for the council. A lot of things have been unclear to us in terms of the council has changed shape slightly in the services they delivers. Local government has changed shape a little bit as well.

We're looking at more broadly within the context of communication and marketing which is the scene that we sit within at the council as well. So yes, we're just starting to go through that process now of actually trying to have a look six months down the line and say, "What will the organisation need to continue working in this way? Not with such a heavy delivery load but certainly with a real focus on customer centric digital delivery. "

David: How involved has the communications in marketing team been with your project?

Sarah: Very. We're an integrated team here so we sits alongside a marketing function and a media team and then there's a graphics, sort of offline graphics function as well. The project sponsor, Martin Done is the service director here for communications and marketing and then you got a great manager for communication's and marketing, Clare Yau, whose work extremely it associates on the delivery and the strategic groups. They're obviously very interested from a project level, very interested from a practitioner level as well in terms of managing that team day to day, integrating digital skills more widely with marketing and media.

The digital team alongside Digital First are doing a lot of that sharing and supporting works so that the marketing team can really take forward end to end digital marketing, content marketing in that channel. The media team can widen their focus perhaps.

We don't intend to move away from traditional media because that's quite stronger for us in Nottinghamshire but to really broaden out and to look more online influences who maybe individuals or smaller community groups or individuals with a geographic area of interest and using those as well in our media mix. We're doing a lot of support to really make a lot of digital part of a lot of people's job as we go forward as well.

David: Where do you think it will ultimately rest? Will it likely see the underneath that marketing communications to sustain it over the years?

Sarah: I think at the moment that's the intention here at Nottinghamshire. And it's certainly something that I'm seeing more of it other council. Through my way of the LocalGov Digital is that, as we said in the beginning, that the move seems to have a come away from IT based teams and IT based work managers, more towards communication and marketing goal. Perhaps in a customer service error as well and we see some of the councils have gone down, that create and put their digital function alongside their customer service and offline channels.

I think for me it can set almost anywhere within your organisation as long as that shared vision. Everybody is aligned to that. A culture within your organisation of the success or the delivery belongs to the whole organisation and the team has to sit somewhere but ultimately, as long as everybody's working together to that shared vision, then we can all share that success.

David: Now you mentioned that early on, you got out and you did the preparation, you did the consultation but throughout the program what are again some of the successes that you had? It is just because you've kept talking to people, kept going back to people, kept asking their opinions, kept getting them engaged that's enabled you to continue to make the progress you have?

Sarah: I think so and having quite high-level of expertise in house that we can get to those, the point where we want to go out and task a lot quicker perhaps than where that expertise isn't available in house. We've certainly found that having an in house team has made us more flexible and we've been able to react faster.

In projects I've worked in before, were they've been setup that you're working with an external partner. There's obviously a bit of back and forth there and time passes because you have to fit in to their schedule and they have to fit into yours. Whereas here, if we want to change something, we can do it within half an hour or however longer it takes just to write the code to do it.

That's been really a nice feeling being out in beta and having commenced from peers and interested people as well as customers who have really helped us to validate some of our thinking, perhaps some of the stuff that we're pushing a little bit further and be on the norm for local government. It's been reassuring to be able to get those comments. As well as actually it shows that perhaps in some cases, we haven't pushed far enough and we can make braver choices.

I think that openness, the testing, by having expertise and being quick to react to feedback has all contributed to this speed which we've been able to deliver so far and hopefully will continue to help us deliver it that speed as well.

David: Yeah. I'm interested though that really in building your team, it sounds like you've recruited to have that capability internally and brought people inside. I think that makes a lot of sense. But I wonder whether or not once the project finishes, is that expertise going to leave the building?

Sarah: There's that potential. Yes, I think what we've tried to do is share that expertise around. So make sure that we're all having conversations with people, make sure that we have been back and spoken to our leadership team and our council is here and really showing them rather than told them what we're doing.

So we've showing them real examples of what we're building and why we're building it in certain ways. Or in some cases we've shown the bad examples if you like of, "Well, we could do this way and that would be quicker or we could do it this way." And when they walk through it themselves, they'll see what we're talking about with user experience.

We've done a lot of that sharing and telling. We've done a lot of talking to services in a way that makes sense to them but it starts to embed that customer-centric thinking. So that hopefully, even if the digital resources does diminish, even if some of those skills do leave the building as you say which is a possibility. Hopefully, some of that thinking embedded within the organisation.

I think the Digital First is a transformation project here at the council although my role is very much focused on the practical delivery of these projects and the practical day to day management of the team that are doing it. It has seeded and supported bigger wave of culture change that's coming through the organisation at the moment. As part of the wider transformation wider than digital, there's lots of things happening in response to the council changing shape and the austerity measures that are emplaced at the moment.

But we are seeing that culture change is that people are starting to think differently and part of that is thinking about digital in different way. So hopefully, even if some do leave the building as you say then, then that mind-set has started to change and that'd be a sustain element there.

David: I'm intrigued by that answer really, around that broader cultural change that you're saying that's being driven out of this Digital First project. What are some of the maybe there's some of the quick things or some of the small things that you've seen that are meaningful in terms of the change?

Sarah: I think that openness to delivering in a different way is one of them and not to be underestimated it. I think when we first started looking what became Digital First, when we started asking questions about our existing platform, we quite quickly came to the conclusion that there was obviously a practical project here that we needed to do to get ourselves to where we needed to be for the customers.

But, we couldn't separate that off from a culture change within the organisation; if this was to be sustainable, if it was to keep moving forward. And so, getting the leadership to the point where they're happy for user testing to decide to a certain extent what the website looks like rather than a set of designs being presented to them and a board picking the one that they like. So, moving that towards that more user experience evidence approach, they've been very open to that and very curious actually about the sort of thinking and the methodologies behind that. Although that perhaps sound a little bit vague and a little bit woolly I think it can't be underestimate within.

Local government is quite cautious and its thinking certainly in the UK than it's quite a risk averse culture. They like doing things that they've done before because they knew that it works. To start opening them up to different approaches, to different thinking has been great for the practical delivery of the project because it allowed us to push forward in ways that perhaps we wouldn't been able to in other organisations. But, I think it's the start of that longer culture change within Nottinghamshire County Council as well.

David: It may be just the final question. You've also referred there are couple of times to the austerity measures that are emplaced in the UK. What role have they play and could I put it to you that the austerity measures really have played key role in being able to open up that culture because instead of being complacent and

holding on to the things of the past, people now clearly understand that things have to change and if they don't change, people will change things for them.

Sarah: Possibly, yes. I mean, without getting too much into it, sort of political debate which isn't in my power to do.

I think certainly these changes, budgets, and austerity measures being of the changing organisation of local government, changing expectations from customers, opening up services that we're perhaps once how to monopoly on delivering in a geographic area. And now, what we would call traded services are competing with the voluntary sector or private sector and to deliver some of those services means that the thinking has to change and you do have to question how you're delivering the service or how you're presenting the delivery of the service.

If you are going to on the one hand meet budget savings, which are there or thing that happening, but also to meet those customers' expectations or to be competitive in a marketplace for the service that you deliver. Then, it has encouraged or triggered changed thinking and yes perhaps allowed some of that control to be relinquished a little bit because there isn't that option anymore. We do need to try new things and we do need to change.

David: Well Sarah Lay, massive amount of value for the audience today. I think they can take away so much from your experience there at Nottinghamshire. Just some of things that I will take away are; the importance of preparation, the importance of having experienced people, preparing well in advanced of anytime that you want to start to your digital project, getting your platform updated and ready to go.

Consultation – absolutely vital. When you talk to people, you listen to people, you assemble the evidence and it's not just in your local area, it's not just in your country, it's around the world and it's just not in your industry. There are insights all over the place that you can bring to win the argument.

Be brave. Make sure you can be brave and really step out there and seek the support to be brave capability and having it internal.

What a fantastic insight there from Sarah about being able to move quickly. Who others haven't work on a project where it goes outside, you have to get involve with those timelines and all the sudden something that you've though was going to take a couple of days is a couple of week. It's all tracked, it's out of control. So

building that internal capability I think to government all over the world is so important to have it in house.

Digital First continuous iteration, it's not and end point. It's really the start of the new way of doing things, the new way of thinking things. The start of being less tactical and more strategic in insuring that the content you create, the value that you deliver is well and truly linked to the business objectives of the organisation.

Sarah, thank you so much for that. That is just a wonderful example, a wonderful case study. I hope someone has written it up somewhere for an academic journal somewhere because it sounds like post September in the weeks, months and years ahead, you're really going to achieve some wonderful things for the people of Nottinghamshire.

Sarah: Let's hope so. That's certainly our intention.

David: Thanks very much for joining us InTransition.

Sarah: Thanks David.