

# Trustguide

Public attitudes towards trust in information communication technologies (ICT)

## Context and aim

Trustguide follows on from work undertaken by the Government's Foresight project concerning Cyber Trust and Crime Prevention. Issues of trust, privacy and security impact on the adoption and use of ICT applications and services and so British Telecom (BT) and Hewlett-Packard (HP) were clearly well positioned to conduct research in this arena.

One of the key cross-cutting themes that emerged from Trustguide was that people are sceptical about claims of security in ICT and the issues of risk, responsibility and restitution were high on the agenda for consumers. Such concerns have a negative impact on the take-up of services.

For example, despite the relatively high proportion of UK households online, only 38% of people used an e-government service in 2006 (the same as the previous year), which compared unfavourably with Canada where 68% of citizens used e-enabled Government services.

### The aims of the Sciencewise-funded part of the project were to:

- engage members of the public in ICT issues
- establish a dialogue between those who use and shape technology to enhance cyber trust
- produce and champion guidelines for those engaged in the research, development and delivery of ICT about how cyber trust might be enhanced

### This was accomplished through:

- semi-structured facilitated workshops employing a mix of 'hands-on' experience and discussions based on relevant topic areas
- an online forum enabling groups to comment on the workshop outcomes of other groups

- producing a summary and final report containing recommendations and guidelines highly relevant to Government, industry and the public sector market

“ Understanding why, where and how trust in the cyber world is lost is vital to the successful introduction of technologies that are true online enablers. Trustguide provided an excellent and welcome opportunity to understand these tensions at first-hand. ”

Stephen Crane, HP Project Manager for Trustguide



## Vital statistics

### Project delivery organisations:

HP and BT with assistance from Plymouth University Information Security & Network Research Group and Knowledge West

**Duration of process:** 15 months (August 2005 to October 2006)

Number of participants: 300 at 29 workshops

**Cost of project:** £140,000 (Sciencewise contribution £40,000)

### Key impacts

- Influenced House of Lords inquiry into personal internet security
- Influenced Lords Constitution Committee on the impact of surveillance and data upon privacy of citizens
- BT and HP project managers presented at industry events in UK, Australia and America
- Led to Trustguide2, funded by HP, involving further public dialogue

This project was funded through open competition, not commissioned to provide input into a live policy area.

# Benefits and impact

## Governance of risk in ICT

The project revealed core cross-cutting themes and these have been developed into a set of guidelines designed to be accessible to, and used by educators, policy makers and service providers alike. The guidelines address issues concerning education, the value of experimentation, restitution measures, guarantees, control and increased transparency in the use of personal data, and openness.

While an initial impression may be that people do not engage with online services because they do not trust them, the project found that trust is not as significant a measure as at first thought. In fact, people are willing to take risks online as long as they are informed and it is clear how any undesired consequences will be addressed.

The project revealed that education is failing both in the adult world and among schoolchildren. Mass media campaigns have had far less impact than expected and the report's authors suggest a multiple method approach that is appropriate to different groups of users.

## Benefits to the public

**The project highlighted the need to understand the deeper social context and the attendant risks and benefits for the development and delivery of trustworthy ICT.**

Observations suggest that where people can 'try' a service without any risk of potential loss they are more likely to build a degree of trust that will influence future

behaviour. Consumers are more likely to place their trust in something that provides safeguards, rather than something that claims nothing can go wrong in the first place.

## Benefits for HP and BT

One of the key benefits for HP and BT is a deeper understanding of public perceptions of ICT. As a result, Trustguide has influenced HP's internal practices to address these needs. BT has used the findings to influence internal policy and practice and to inform its corporate customers.

HP and BT learned a great deal about the process of engaging with the public and HP has taken this forward in a follow-on project, Trustguide2. BT is using this work to support major bid teams and shape new proposals for strategic development.

## Dissemination of results

**Trustguide is making a major contribution to Government thinking on ICT. The report has been included in two submissions - to the House of Lords Select Committee on Personal Internet Security and to the Lords Constitution Committee on the Impact of Surveillance and Data Collection.**

The HP and BT Project Managers have spoken at significant events in the UK including the Cabinet Office's roadshow on Information Assurance that toured the UK in 2006. The authors have delivered the findings to audiences in the US and Australia and have published several papers in relevant journals including Computers & Security, BTTJ and the IEC Annual Review of Communications.

# Learning from the process

In engaging the participants with the issues, HP and BT found a mixed methodological approach was best. Technological demonstrations providing 'hands-on' experience together with discussions focusing on current stories in the media and provocative quotes on issues of security, privacy and trust acted as a catalyst to discussion.

Participants found it more difficult to engage with issues that were not current, or outside their experience, and with technologies that required projecting 2-5 years in the future.

The project highlights the need to ask the right questions. The project began by trying to tease out which ICT services and technologies were generally considered most trustworthy, what signified that trustworthiness, and why. It was very quickly discovered that these were the wrong questions. While BT and HP talked about trust, the participants talked back about risk and hence the direction of the research was changed to reflect this.

## What would be done differently?

- Identify beforehand Government departments with whom to work
- Secure input from policy makers on the questions they want answered
- Enlist the support of an independent public facilitation group to contribute to the organisation, design and delivery of the public dialogue
- Engage an external evaluator to give ongoing feedback on the processes

# Contacts and links

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**Project report:**  
[www.trustguide.org.uk/publications](http://www.trustguide.org.uk/publications)

**House of Lords Select Committee on personal internet security:**  
[www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)

Find out more at: [www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk](http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk)