

# Stakeholder, corporate, and policy perspectives

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This article takes all of its examples and case studies from New Zealand. The main justification for this approach is that New Zealand has been described as the world's laboratory for progressive digital legislation; "if a policy maker, public servant or politician comes to me and asks me who to talk to around digital policy, I increasingly find myself looking at New Zealand as the place that is the most compelling"<sup>2</sup>.

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New Zealand's economy has some unique characteristics but shares others with many developed nations. It has been transformed from an agrarian to a more industrialized, free market economy, but in the process has deepened socio-economic divisions, suffered from mediocre economic performance and is heavily indebted internationally. Although its current population is

predominantly of European origin, New Zealand is a bicultural society with a significant indigenous population of Māori, numbering approximately

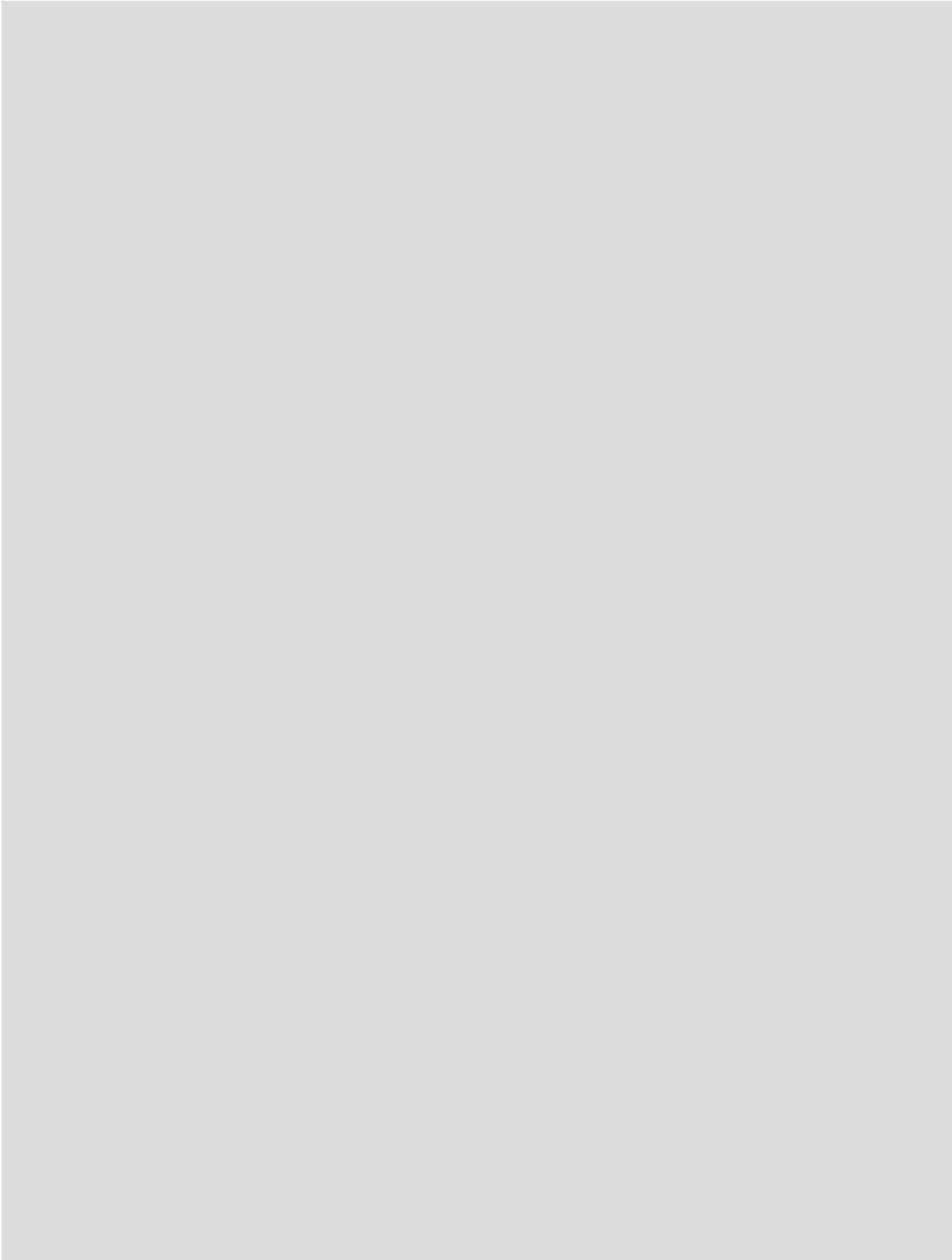
600,000. A Māori [ ]

indigenous and immigrant cultures, where various



The second case study (Box 8.2) looks at Orewa College, a school in a relatively affluent socio-economic area that was a pioneer of the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) approach to mobile

learning. This example helps to illuminate the nature of policy that is developed in a bottom up manner from school leadership teams.



The third case study (Box 8.3) looks at the Manaiakalani Trust, a community based initiative

that has attracted high profile philanthropic support.

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One of the policy problems faced by the trust is that its intent on to pioneer a community based approach that could be copied and implemented elsewhere has been a victim of its own success. Its high media profile and success in improving outcomes for disadvantaged students has attracted philanthropic support that could not be replicated across other similar initiatives. It also faces issues in that some of its projects are funded as short-term ventures that may be

designed for the creation of software artefacts, those that are increasingly used in schools tend towards the drag and drop approach that of end users is a real time construction approach of software development. An example from the mobile learning space is the use of Hopscotch for developing mobile software on iPads. School students can learn to develop mobile software using a mobile platform, but it is unclear to what extent such skills are transferable to other types of IT knowledge. This is particularly important in a context where the routine tasks of software development are often outsourced, and higher-level design, architecture and strategy skills are required by employers. Another issue that arises is whether the software tools that students experience in their formal education prepare them adequately for the software tools used by industry, particularly an issue if students only use mobile devices.

In any innovative approach to digital teaching and learning there is a potential tension between moving ahead with pioneering projects and the maintenance or enhancement of equity. How is it possible to ensure that 'all boats rise on the same tide' while not being held back by the valid needs or attitudes of minorities. There seem to be two aspects to this issue. First, before a new innovation is launched there needs to be extensive dissemination and discussion of information in order to ensure the maximum possible buy-in, while implementation strategies must also ensure that mechanisms are in place to bring all stakeholders along with the main tide. As some of the examples highlighted in this article indicate, this includes supporting minority indigenous cultures as well as providing disadvantaged social groups with the ability to engage in informal learning by building community infrastructure that can support mobile learning.

A question that should be asked when looking to the future is whether concepts such as ICT, mobile devices or 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are still relevant to debates about future education policy. Our thinking about the future of education is based around some concepts that have common currency, having been well established over the last 20 years or so. The debate about whether the concept of the digital native is real or imaginary has already led to some critical commentary on how today's young people learn. However, there are other commonly used terms that have

so far endured less scrutiny, but may be equally unhelpful. Defining a 21<sup>st</sup> century skill is largely meaningless, in the same way that defining a



poverty and minority/indigenous culture all have to be accounted for.

- Policy must balance both short-term and long-term goals.

The main message of this article is that mobile learning policy is dependent on a complex interaction of stakeholders in its formulation and implementation. It requires a major commitment on the part of national government to provide infrastructure and services, but the process cannot only be one of top-down policy. Bottom-up policy

is equally important as it allows communities, cultures and regions to adapt to their specific needs. These may be driven by local industry, socio-economic profile, indigenous language, demographics, or a range of other factors.

The case studies in this article may be drawn from one national context but their lessons can be translated to other countries and regions. They demonstrate the importance of diversity of approach and commitment to develop mobile learning at all levels of society, from national government, to local community, to individual school and individual person, whether millionaire philanthropist, teacher, student or parent.

- <sup>1</sup> UNESCO. (2013). *h* . Available at: [ht p://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002196/219641e.pdf](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002196/219641e.pdf) Accessed 23 Nov. 2016.
- <sup>2</sup> Eaves, D. (2013). New Zealand – The World’s Laboratory for Progressive Digital Legislat on. *u h* [online] 18 September Available at: [ht p://techpresident.com/news/wegov/24353/new-zealand-worlds-laboratory-progressive-digital-legislat on](http://techpresident.com/news/wegov/24353/new-zealand-worlds-laboratory-progressive-digital-legislat on) Accessed 23 Nov. 2016.
- <sup>3</sup> Bauer, J., Kim, J. and Wildman, S. (2005). An integrated framework for assessing broadband policy opt ons. *U o O k* , 21.