

SPECIAL REPORT

The Paperless NHS and the Role of Board Meeting Software

Improving Productivity and Efficiency with Digital Meetings

Realising the Goal of the Paperless NHS

How New Technology Can Revolutionise Meetings

Digitisation: Overcoming Barriers to Change

The Future of Digital Meetings

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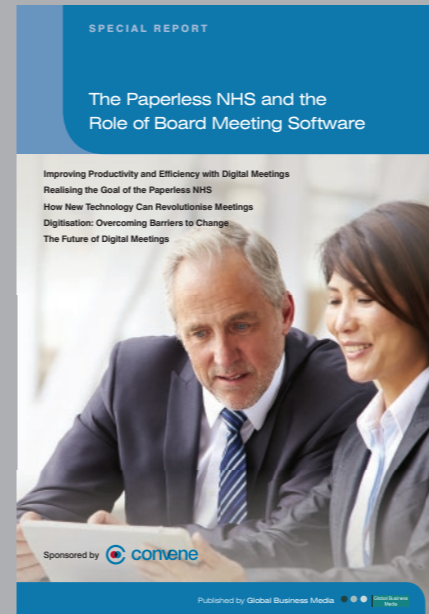
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Foreword

EVERY GOVERNMENT minister likes to think about his or her legacy and for the current Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, that legacy will be how he will deal with the aging administration system of the NHS. For an organisation which is central to the lives of so many people in this country, it can often feel as if it's frighteningly behind the times.

He wants to change that with an ambitious goal to make the NHS paperless by 2018.

That's only a little over a year away and, so far, progress has been patchy. However, the technology is there, it just needs to be packaged in a way that can be used.

Our opening article comes from Gemma Walford, Head of EU Sales, Azeus Convene, who develop cutting edge meeting software for businesses. As they point out, the traditional paper-based method of conducting meetings may have worked well in the past, but times are changing. Technology is now available which can achieve much more.

We will then take a look at the Government's journey towards a paperless health service. Making the transition requires money, education and a major change of structure and working culture. It's no easy

task but, as Jo Roth learns, every part of the NHS has a role to play, including meetings. He charts their evolution from the traditional model we all know and, more often than not, loathe, to something more agile, flexible and intuitive. Digital technology will be key to achieving all this.

James Butler will then look at some of the benefits as well as some of the potential roadblocks. In particular, he argues, the transfer of information into the digital domain will present security concerns especially in the light of the new Draft Communications Bill which could put a huge amount of highly sensitive information at risk.

Finally, we'll look at how the latest generation of business meeting software solutions work and how they are helping to make business meetings more efficient, effective and simple to organise. Technology is changing the landscape and the future will be exciting. Will the NHS be able to update its attitudes and practices to keep pace?

Tom Cropper
Editor

Tom Cropper has produced articles and reports on various aspects of global business over the past 15 years. He has also worked as a copywriter for some of the largest corporations in the world, including ING, KPMG and the Zurich

Improving Productivity and Efficiency with Digital Meetings

Gemma Walford, Head of EU Sales, Azeus Convene



DIGITALISATION CAN be defined as the social transformation triggered by the mass adoption of digital technologies to generate, process, share and transact information. Not only does digitalisation build on the rapid advancement of network access technologies, semiconductor technologies, and software engineering, but it also leverages the effects resulting from their use (common platforms for application development, e-government services, e-commerce, social networks, and availability of online information).

Digitalisation enables interactions between human beings and machines like never before. It helps us in two ways. First, smart machines help human beings offload some aspects of their work to pursue more complex activities that are non-transactional or non-operational. Second, smart machines can work in conjunction with people, supporting human decision-making, data collection and data processing.

Interestingly, digitalisation follows the law of demand in economics – as it becomes more popular, the costs associated with the process of digitalisation continues to fall rapidly. As a result, more and more people and organisations are getting connected every day. In 2005, there were just 500 million devices connected to the

Internet while today there are 8 billion. By 2030, that number is expected to grow to 1 trillion.

How Being Digital Is Helping Us

After having discussed about digitalisation and its impact on our lives, organisations and the industry in general, it is important to understand how digital transformation is making a positive contribution to businesses.

Why Digitalisation of Meetings is Important

The term "meeting" has become so omnipresent that we consider it as a regular and mundane activity like many others and associate ourselves closely with it. Indeed, throughout history, meetings have always existed and have been important to human beings – they have been critical in the very survival of humankind. Meetings are important simply because they are events where we share expertise, perspectives, solve complex problems, build strategies and take critical decisions. It is that forum where we agree on what will happen next and how and who is going to be responsible for subsequent actions. In a professional context, especially, meetings are necessary and imperative and form the backbone on which organisational decisions are taken.



Helping the NHS achieve its 2020 paperless target



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In a professional context, especially, meetings are necessary and imperative and form the backbone on which organisational decisions are taken



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REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Digitalisation enables businesses to adopt many other operating procedures that significantly reduce their carbon footprint and environmental impact. Examples could go paperless, using energy intelligently and enabling remote work and communication environments reducing need to travel



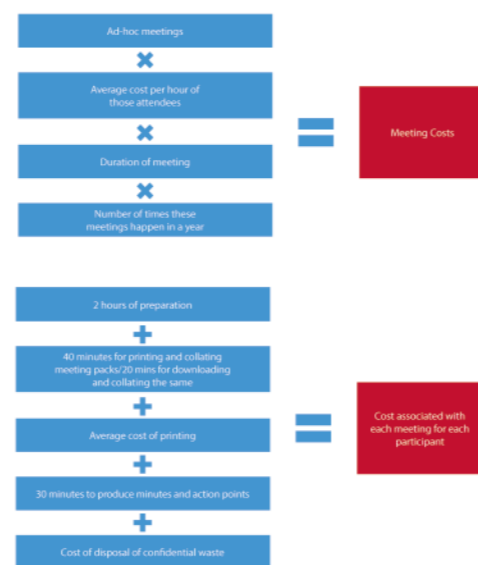
SMARTER WORKPLACE AND EMPLOYEES

Going digital implies workplaces becoming smart and undergoing transformation as well. Employees are not bound by devices or the need to be physically present for everything. Information can be shared, collaboration in a team can be instant and real-time - ways of working are more efficient, effective and stress-free

Yet, take a quick look at the internet and you will find that the common consensus today is that meetings do not play a productive role in the 21st century modern workplace. A common finding of many studies is about the frequency of meetings – that there are too many of them and that most of these are a waste of time and resources. Participants in some surveys claim that up to 50% of the meetings that they attend are a waste of time.

You will surely have attended meetings that you felt were a waste of time, maybe you have some in your calendar that you are looking at and thinking how you could get out of them. Somewhere at the back of your mind, you will always have wanted to do something about it – change everything about meetings. As you continue to read this paper, you will surely get some ideas on how to change the overall experience associated with the process of arranging and attending a great meeting.

The most important question we need to answer is why are meetings associated with negativity and lack of productivity? The answer can be split into three parts:



1. Preparation.
2. Conducting the meeting.
3. Following up from the meeting.

A bad meeting is made up of all these three parts and unsurprisingly they are all intricately inter-related.



Ad-hoc meetings

- These are the most spontaneous of meetings that happen when collaborative working tools can no longer give you the depth or benefits that a face-to-face or even a teleconference can. They generally focus on a single topic and will quite often be the kick off point for the next type of meeting required.



Workgroup or Project

- These can vary in the level of formality and structure depending upon the nature of the company and the complexity of the work involved. A lot of the meeting time will be devoted to status updates and looking at formal documents such as risk registers. Actions and follow ups form a common part of this type of meeting and they may involve colleagues from other parts of the business or even other parts of the world. Increasingly, they will involve people who are not from your own company but who have been contracted to deliver part of the work.
- In many organisations, the scheduling of these meetings does not follow the urgency of the project and meetings are calendared at regular intervals which can mean that some meetings are overly long for the matters that need to be discussed and some are overly compressed.

Another factor that influences what we think about a meeting is whether the meeting was necessary in the first place – should it have taken place at all. Remember that the most important finding in those surveys is that we have too many meetings. Do you want to be the person whose meetings everyone tries to avoid? Surely not – so let's start to put in place the steps to help you avoid that.

Remember that meetings are expensive as they take people away from tasks on which the productivity of the organisation is judged. So, you cannot be making that sales call or client visit that brings in revenues if you are held up in a meeting about the latest expense policy from HR.

Meetings – Types, Costs and the Need for Change

There are many types of meeting that occur in your organisation. These broadly fall into the categories in the table on the next page.

They are so routine and commonplace that you have probably never considered their cost – so let's do that calculation now.



Stakeholder meetings

- These take place as part of a defined workflow that requires different parts of the organisation to work together. These include HR meetings or Contract meetings or even writing responses to Tenders. These meetings are often in response to specific events.



Team meetings

- The most expensive meetings that you have are your regular team meetings. Team meetings are mostly built into the standard management practice of organisations. It is likely that you are invited to attend a team meeting once a week or once every two weeks. If you are a manager you are probably calling a team meeting and attending a management team meeting at the same kind of frequency. Most staff meetings are used to cascade information down the organisation, have team status updates and maybe a presentation or two from staff working on particular projects or on the latest organisational initiatives.

Cost associated with each meeting for each participant

As you can see there is both the cost of the actual meeting and the cost of the lost productivity in the preparation and follow up.

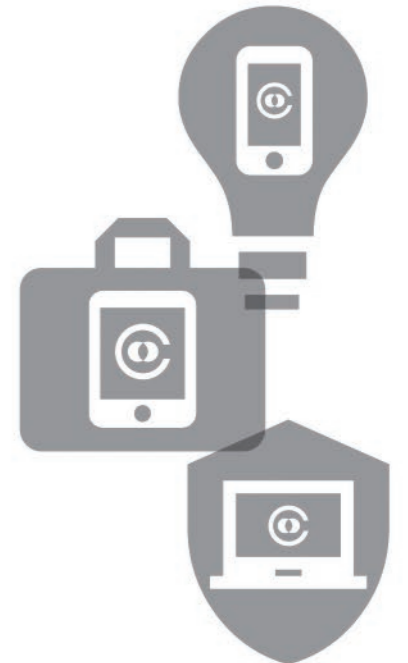
Team meetings – Team meetings are normally routine – so let's look at their different parts and find ways that these can be done better.

As mentioned previously, team meetings are probably mandated by the HR department or form a standard management practice – you may even have to periodically produce minutes of these meetings to demonstrate that they are actually taking place. So, while not having them at all is not an option, making them shorter and focused probably is.

Information cascade or policy update – This is a standard part of many team meetings in which a necessary document will probably exist elsewhere, perhaps on a shared drive or a corporate Intranet, but the purpose of the team meeting is to ensure that everyone is aware of the relevant information. You may be responsible



A comprehensive digital solution for smarter, simpler and more secure meetings



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Even in well organised workplaces, the scenario where people have not focused on the relevant sections is not unusual and, inevitably, this will derail the meeting schedule causing either the meeting to overrun or parts of the agenda to be dropped



Behavioural

- Stick to the agenda don't get side-tracked or allow others to divert from the meeting agenda
- Stick to time and encourage others to stick to the time allotted on the agenda
- Be objective and encourage participation where there is a decision to be made



Organisational

- Make sure that documents are sent out before the meeting with sufficient time for people to read them
- Make sure that everyone has the most up to date documents on the day of the meeting
- Make sure that action items are circulated in time for those concerned to follow up on them and report back in time for the next meeting



Technical

- Most collaboration tools treat meetings as being outside of their core processes. In fact, majority of them treat meetings as something that can be eliminated as a result of the processes enabled by their tools. Remote meeting tools will only manage the instance of the meeting and are useful only for facilitating where meeting participants have to be in different physical locations.

for bringing the relevant parts to the attention of the attending group. Current preparation for this type of update meeting is normally.

1. An email is sent to the meeting participants with a request that they view the document before the meeting.
2. The person leading the meeting will print off a copy and highlight or add post it notes to the relevant sections and draw the participants' attention to them in the meeting. One or more of the meeting participants will not have read the document at all or will not have paid sufficient attention to these sections and hence will ask many questions.
3. There will be some action points on how to implement or requests for clarification on the document that will need to be carried forward to the next meeting.

The process is already broken at point 1 above. This is because most people will only want to read the sections of the document that are directly relevant to them. Faced with a large or a seemingly irrelevant document, they will not read past the opening few paragraphs. It does not matter whether they receive a paper copy, a link to the Intranet or the document via email. They already have a busy schedule and are not likely to have the time to read all of it.

In organisations with a poor meeting culture, the most likely scenario is that participants receive several emails about the same meeting and probably lose track of which documents they should be viewing. They are informed of the final agenda only when they arrive at the team meeting.

Even in well organised workplaces, the scenario where people have not focused on the relevant sections is not unusual and, inevitably, this will derail the meeting schedule causing either the meeting to overrun or parts of the agenda to be dropped.

Team meetings often run a rota system for the minutes and actions with someone assigned to the task for each meeting. If this is not treated as a priority task by the person leading the meeting, then it is often not performed at all, with minutes and actions not circulated until close to the agenda being issued for the next meeting.

So, if these are scenarios that you recognise and have experienced, how can you change them and start to facilitate more productive team meetings? The 3 steps that you can take are detailed above.

Essential Features of a Digital Meeting Solution

To make meetings work better, a digital meeting solution needs to augment the behavioural and organisational requirements outlined in the earlier section. This means the digital tool needs to be useful for:

- Meeting Preparation.
- Conducting the meeting.
- Managing the follow up actions or items from the meeting.

Meeting Preparation

It should be a non-brainer that the tool should be able to manage meeting agendas and publish meeting files directly to devices of participants, whether they are laptops, tablets or mobile phones.

For the tool to become beneficial it must help change behaviours and not just automate processes. Consider our process in the earlier team meeting example:

'The person leading the item at the meeting will print off a copy and highlight or add post it notes to the relevant parts and draw the participants' attention to them in the meeting. One or more of the meeting participants will not have read the document at all or will not have paid

sufficient attention to these sections and so will ask many questions.'

What would make the meeting tool useful is providing the person leading the meeting the ability to mark-up relevant documents in advance and share those annotations with the people who need to read them. This would mean participants can focus only on the sections of the document that are relevant to them in the meeting.

The tool could even enable questions and answers before the meeting – these might then be turned into action points even before the meeting starts.

Conducting the meeting

With the updated documents, along with annotations shared in advance, the meeting can focus much more on healthy discussions of complex issues and decision-making rather than anything redundant.

Adding a simple timer tool can enable all the participants to be aware of how long an individual agenda item is taking and give a sense of shared responsibility for the meeting's success.

The tool should also allow action points to be allocated transparently within the meeting – this way everyone is sure who is responsible for what and by when it needs to be delivered.

Managing the meeting follow up

The tool should be able to deliver a summary of the meeting including the documents, annotations and action points to all the participants as soon as the meeting is finished. No more waiting around for the person on the minute taking rota to send out their update.

Individuals should be able to use the tool to complete action points and follow ups either online or offline with the results syncing back to the server and on the device of their choosing. The action points and follow ups should automatically get carried forward to the next meeting in the series with their status updates.

Introducing Convene – A Leading Digital Meeting Solution

Convene is a leading and award-winning board portal solution designed specifically for your organisation to incorporate an easy-to-use, seamless and secure digitalised process of creating and managing meetings and associated meeting materials.

Designed for the senior executives, executive assistants and administrators, Convene is an end-to-end comprehensive solution that helps them to be fully prepared for the next

Convene – A Snapshot



For senior level executives

- Easy to use – Convene is a user-friendly board portal software. You and your team will never require expensive training to learn and use the solution.
- Compatible on all platforms - Convene works on all iOS, Android and Windows devices. So you can work on any device at your convenience.
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Convene works on all iOS, Mac, Android and Windows devices



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For executive assistants & administrators

- Hassle free board pack creation – Convene helps you save time of printing photocopies and sending multiple emails. With this board portal solution, you can not only go paperless but also can prepare and share all meeting documents in seconds.
- Real time distribution – With Convene, you can make and distribute minutes, notes and action points in real time as soon as the meeting finishes.
- Great customer care support – Convene provides multilingual support. You will always receive great attendance from our local experts in a language that you prefer.

With the updated documents, along with annotations shared in advance, the meeting can focus much more on healthy discussions of complex issues and decision-making rather than anything redundant

meeting. It not only helps your organisation establish more robust Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC) processes, but also eliminates stress factors of attending and arranging numerous meetings, thereby making employees healthier in the long run. Importantly, Convene is a paperless solution that helps create an environment-friendly workplace incorporating processes that are green and sustainable.

When Applied in Real-Life – Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust Case Study

Convene helped Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust reduce their printing by nearly 60,000 pages a year.

"The main driver for switching to Convene was the amount of time and money we were spending on printing. The average board pack was 104 pages, with 14 participants and 11 meetings a year. That's 16,000 pages. Then for the Trust Executive Group, which has 12 meetings a year, we were printing another 42,500 pages," said Anne Greaves, Digital Communications Officer at Sheffield.

Before choosing Convene, the NHS Foundation conducted a lot of research into different products. They even considered Dropbox and Google Drive, but due to their high level

of security concerns, they had to reject both of these options.

Anne also mentioned *"We then did a compare and contrast with a few specialist products, including Convene, and met with the different companies too. There were several factors that swayed it in favour of Convene. One was the cost. And another was the fact that Convene is cross-platform and works on Android, Windows and iOS too, whereas some of the others were just iPad. Plus, we got the sense there was a lot more flexibility in terms of moving Convene forward and adapting it to our needs, which wouldn't necessarily be the case with the other providers."*

However, before deciding on Convene, the Foundation –

- trialed the product for a long time to test the use of a digital meeting solution in real meetings.
- trained numerous administrators to make sure they were using it consistently to build and publish meetings.
- got champions to promote it internally.
- set a deadline to stop printing.

And finally, Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust was so impressed with Convene that they have become one of the most loyal customers and have continuously increased the number of licenses to implement the solution across the organisation.

Realising the Goal of the Paperless NHS

Tom Cropper, Editor

The NHS is working towards a digital paperless future, but although the technology exists, the goal can sometimes still feel distant.

GOING TO the doctor can sometimes feel like a step back in time. While we live and work in a world which is nearly fully automated, the NHS still relies on technology and processes which can seem antiquated by comparison. Although the majority of NHS Trusts are putting digitisation measures in place, many still adhere to a paper-based administration system. That is something the government is keen to change.

The Paperless NHS

Businesses are working hard to make the transition to computer-based operations and when you look at the figures you can see why. The average office worker uses 10,000 sheets of paper every year – nearly 70% of that is thought to be wasted¹. That equates to four boxes of paper which could cost approximately £10 each. The most common reasons for this waste are failing to use the duplex function, printing off emails, printing duplicates or forgetting about documents left on the printer.

Reducing paper could save businesses thousands. Citigroup estimated that it could save \$700,000 if each of its employees used double sided copying². Bank of America managed to cut its paper consumption by 25% in two years with simple precautions such as duplex copying and not printing emails³.

Towards a Digital NHS

Meetings are particularly paper-hungry. Think about the last meeting you had: how much paper was shared around the group and how much of that went straight in the bin? Here, as much as any other part of business life, digital and paperless technology can make a huge difference.

This is all a key part of Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt's drive to create a paperless NHS

by 2018. Doing so, he believes, could potentially save the NHS billions. At the time the drive was announced, during the coalition government, a PwC survey backed up his arguments by saying measures such as texting some test results and electronic prescriptions could generate 'huge savings'⁴.

Doing so, though, comes at a cost. Early in 2016, Hunt announced that he was setting aside £4bn towards delivery of the paperless NHS projects such as electronic prescriptions, online appointments and online administration systems⁵. The funding includes £1.8bn to remove outdated technology such as fax machines, £1bn on cyber security and data consent, £400m for a new website and £750m to transform out-of-hours hospital care.

Managing Risks

Therein lies the big problem. Transition is expensive with no guarantee of success. What if new technology and systems fail? How will they disrupt existing working practices? Can they cause unforeseen complications and will patients and doctors accept them? Innovation always meets with resistance from those who are used to working in a certain way.

There are some patients who will not be comfortable using online technology to make appointments or to communicate with their GPs. Equally, many doctors are distrustful of IT and prefer face to face contact and tried and tested methods with which they are familiar. A study from Technology Advice Research found that 75% of people would not trust a prescription they receive via telemedicine. However, the figures were different for younger groups with only 17% of 18 to 24 year olds saying they would not trust a diagnosis and 24% of 25 to 44 year olds⁶.

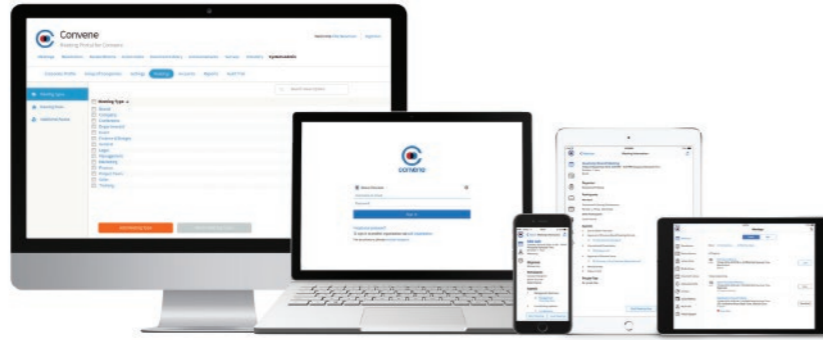


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Businesses are working hard to make the transition to computer-based operations and when you look at the figures you can see why

Variable Adoption

Adoption of digital technologies also varies across the NHS. Around half said they had good readiness to plan, deliver and optimise systems for the paperless NHS. However, most of those currently only have levels of digital use which are deemed satisfactory, with many having capabilities which fall below 50%⁷. The figures demonstrate a key problem – even though trusts are aware of the digital project and enthusiastic, they have some way to go to implement proposals. Some are struggling even to develop plans and strategies.

How can this be overcome?

The technology is there. We use it in every part of our life. What's missing is trust and comfort with new systems, along with the capabilities to introduce them. However, the growth of digitisation programmes is like a snowball effect. The more people use them, the cheaper they get and the faster the products evolve. Developers can harness the experience of use in the field to improve products, increase performance, and demonstrate effectiveness. The more people use these technologies, the more they overcome the inertia of unfamiliarity. Any new technologies take time to gain acceptance, especially when

they require a significant shift in perspective and attitude. As more practices buy into the technology, they are generating case studies which demonstrate performance. As they do, they are breaking down barriers to acceptance.

Truly delivering a paperless NHS, though, needs more than just the development of technology – it means embedding digital practices into every aspect of daily processes. Internal documents can be shared to avoid unnecessary trips to the printer. Services such as Microsoft Office 365 offer interactive sharing of documents. This means multiple individuals can edit documents from multiple locations reducing the risk of duplication and the need for print outs. Meetings can be run with the aid of mobile digital equipment – such as tablets through which documents can be shared, presentations viewed and information changed. Productivity can also improve with participants able to put ideas mentioned in meetings into action more quickly.

If the NHS is to truly realise its goal of paperless operations, therefore, it must not only incorporate new technologies but embrace new ways of working. It's about understanding what's available and working to integrate it smoothly and efficiently into existing operations.

How New Technology Can Revolutionise Meetings

Jo Roth, Staff Writer

Meetings are a crucial part of work life, but they can be inefficient and wasteful. How can this change?

THOUSANDS OF years ago, man's early ancestors would occasionally come together to discuss matters in tribal gatherings. Ever since then meetings have played a crucial role in our world. They are a chance to share information, collaborate, take stock and make plans. As organisations of all kinds look for ways to streamline operations, they are asking themselves if their current meetings are as efficient as they could be and can they do something to make things better? The answers to both questions are: no, and yes respectively.

A Problem of Efficiency

Meetings may be necessary but they take up time and resources. According to a recent study, the average worker sits through 6,240 meetings in their working lives. Seven out of ten admitted to switching off shortly after the meeting begins⁸. A 2012 IBOPE Zogby survey found that, in a typical conference call, 10 minutes will be taken up by distractions on average. That's approximately 23% of total meeting time wasted⁹. If you represent lost productivity by a fiscal sum, the financial cost of wasted meeting time becomes clear. US Tech Company MarketingKing has suggested people in the US waste \$37bn in unnecessary meetings every year¹⁰. Those costs result from the time the meeting takes up and the removal of staff from other more profitable tasks.

For a service such as the NHS in which money is already tight, that wasted time has serious knock-on effects further down the line. You don't need to look too far to see just how short of money the NHS and primary care is. Hospital Trusts are forecasting a £2.3bn deficit¹¹ by the end of this financial year with quality of care suffering due to tight budgets.

Staffing is also in short supply, and is struggling to keep up with demand. A report from the Kings Fund found that the overall number of consultations – either face to face or via the telephone – had increased by 15% – three times

the rate of the increase in GPs. These consultations are also becoming more complex. The biggest increase in consultation numbers came among people over the age of 85 (up by 28%) who are likely to have more than one chronic condition¹². Figures released by the Royal College of General Practitioners show that some areas will need a 50% increase in the number of GPs by 2020 to keep up with a growing population¹³. Meanwhile, a report released in August 2016 found that nearly 90% of practice staff struggle with stress as they try to cope with increasingly heavy workloads¹⁴.

Any measures which can reduce workload or streamline processes will free staff up for more productive processes and reduce the strain on their working life.

Environmental impact is also a key issue. The NHS – like all public service bodies – is under pressure to reduce its carbon footprint of which paper usage represents an important part. Digitising paper-hungry processes such as meetings can significantly reduce paper consumption, which has a threefold benefit. Not only does it reduce operational costs, but it also helps significantly towards environmental goals and can also be used as a useful PR tool. It shows a practice is clean, responsible, efficient and forward thinking – all the things it needs to be.

The Next Generation

The technology now exists to make board meetings more effective and sustainable. Mobile devices such as iPads and the internet mean that, with intelligently designed software, it is possible to stay connected and collaborate with teams in multiple locations. This overcomes the traditional barriers of meetings in a number of ways.

First, it makes it much easier to access and share meeting minutes – participants can also quickly view and download notes from a previous meeting without any trouble or wasted paper. They can also



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You don't need to look too far to see just how short of money the NHS and primary care is. Hospital Trusts are forecasting a £2.3bn deficit by the end of this financial year with quality of care suffering due to tight budgets



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look up any relevant information. For example, if some statistical information is needed, it can be pulled up with just a few clicks.

Equally, board members can still participate in a meeting even if they are not present. Platforms such as Skype and Google Hangouts enable colleagues to collaborate face to face even if they are in different time zones.

The entire process is also much less cumbersome for all involved. Board packs can often be heavy and bulky to carry around. They may also contain extremely sensitive information which could be vulnerable if a pack were lost or stolen. Duplicate copies will also need to be shredded after a meeting in order to ensure security and confidentiality. It's much simpler and safer if members can simply access all the information they need through their tablet or phone.

Best of all, most people already have this technology and are encouraged to bring it in through schemes such as 'bring your own device to work'. Organisations are also increasingly

willing to use dedicated corporate devices on which staff can conduct any business they need.

Missing Ingredients

What is missing is the software to bring this all together. For example, Skype may enable you to speak with a colleague in another country, but it can be difficult to share files. Meetings can grind to a halt as participants try to work out how to share a simple document.

To encourage people to switch to digital meeting software, developers need to be able to replicate the feeling of having a meeting pack in their hands. It should be easy to communicate, view and share any files they want – and to be intuitive to use with minimal instruction. Companies are bringing to market a range of options, many of which have been specifically designed for the healthcare sector. Selecting these can be the glue that enables the NHS to digitise their meetings, bringing them one step closer to the goal of a paperless future.

Digitisation: Overcoming Barriers to Change

James Butler, Staff Writer

How NHS managers must balance the risks versus rewards of the paperless project.

THE NHS is moving towards a paperless system and meetings play an important role in this. However, as managers plan the purchase and implementation of new technologies there is one important question they should ask: why? So overpowering is the drive towards digital technology that it's easy to lose focus of what it is supposed to achieve and the risks new technology can present. This is an important question to ask because those risks are considerable.

The Friend Finder Networks Hack

Two recent events should loom large in any discussion of digital technology in the workplace. Earlier in the month, *Friend Finder Networks* announced that more than 400 million accounts worldwide had been hacked¹⁵. The site boasts more than 40 million active members who use the site to arrange quick, no frills, encounters. The potential for embarrassment is huge especially as the hacked addresses included people from high level public in corporate positions and the government. It also shows how frail the system can be with even a company such as the *Friend Finder Networks*, where confidentiality should be paramount, being at risk.

The second is the recent passage of the Draft Communications Data Bill, which has profound implications for organisations of all kinds. The government will require internet providers to keep everyone's internet records for 12 months, which means they will be able to see anyone's browsing histories without a warrant. Businesses, however, are also concerned about the amount of information which, therefore, could be made available to hackers. In February, a group of MPs warned that the bill could harm technology companies. The costs of compiling such data would be considerable, while Apple warned that it could 'spark international conflict' by forcing non-UK companies to break data encryption

and hack their own customers¹⁶. However, the problem extends far beyond just technology companies. Every organisation which uses the internet extensively must consider the implications.

Keeping Information Safe

The bill has important implications for the NHS as it harnesses digital technology and stores more information online. Potentially, the bill makes that information much less secure. Should an internet service provider be hacked, in the same way as the *Friend Finder Networks*, hackers could have access to an organisation's entire browsing activity. If customer data or information is stored in the cloud, that could also be visible to hackers.

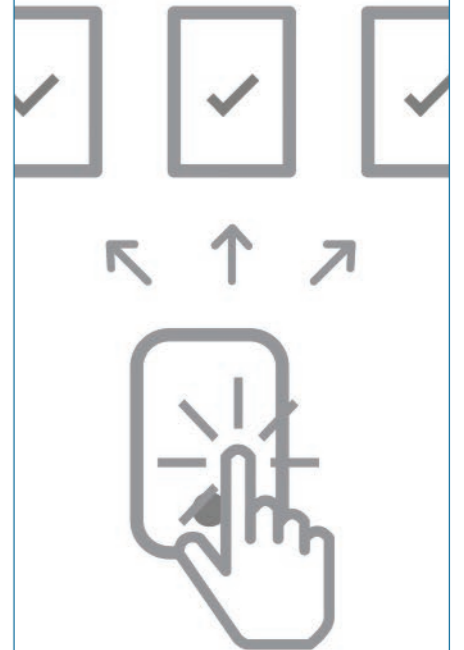
With any drive towards digitisation, the NHS must consider security, but in the fast-changing world of cyber-crime, that is an ever-evolving landscape. Hackers are continually updating their plan of attack in order to find ways around defences, while new regulations such as the Draft Communications Data Bill create new opportunities for cyber criminals.

When updating to new digital meeting software, managers must first consider what information will be transmitted and stored electronically before thinking about how it can be secured safely. Using a VPN network for all online operations can make it more difficult to track the origin of that activity, but it pays to hire professionals and to continually update processes to ensure security protocols are fit for service. In an environment like this, every security measure has a sell-by date.

As well as keeping data safe, the NHS needs to ensure new technology actually works in the real world. The failure of the National Programme for IT which cost the taxpayer more than £10bn until it was abandoned¹⁷ demonstrates that new technology does not automatically guarantee improved performance. If it doesn't work, it can hinder, rather than advance, progress.



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Hackers are continually updating their plan of attack in order to find ways around defences, while new regulations such as the Draft Communications Data Bill create new opportunities for cyber criminals



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Achieving Ambitious Goals

In many ways, the NHS risks confusing itself over the goal and intent. The government's 'goal' is to achieve a paperless NHS by 2018, but that should not be the end target in itself. Instead, it should be looking at all the benefits it hopes to realise such as reduced paper use, greater productivity, streamlined operations and lower cost. All innovations should be structured specifically around how they will achieve those ends. If they do not, the leaders of the NHS could be sitting back having achieved their goal of a paperless NHS, but realised none of the benefits. Achieving full digitisation does little if it fails to make the operational and structural improvements all parties hope for and expect.

Equally, the move must take into consideration those who will not want to use fully digital technologies. Electronic prescriptions and online appointment making may well work for most people, but what about those who either do not have access to the internet, or still prefer paper-based operations? Provisions will have to be made in which paper retains a role both for internal and external facing operations.

The good news is that the will is there among all parties. Awareness of the paperless project among NHS staff at all levels is high and Trusts up and down the country are working on ways to introduce digital technology into day-to-day operations. These must be done with a clear strategy in place. At the InterSystems Connected Healthcare Conference in 2015, Inderjit Singh, Head of Enterprise Architecture at NHS England, said each local area should be required to draw up an annual digital roadmap to outline how they plan to achieve paper-free status¹⁸. This makes it

easier to set a timetable through which ideas and plans are translated into action and it can also help managers track progress.

Reliable Technology

Technology must also be working well. For example, the e-Referral service was beset with problems when it went live in 2015¹⁹. It was introduced with 33 known issues, including slow loading, problems displaying forms and other functionality glitches, and crashed a few days after launching. Since then, it has received multiple updates and fixes, and is now running well. However, every problem impacts reputation, delays progress and erodes patient trust.

As well as technology, the NHS needs a shift in culture and attitudes. The paperless project envisions a future of joined-up working in which files and information can be shared between Trusts; patients will be able to take their records with them when they move from one practice to another and access them at any time they want. This means changing the way the NHS looks at every aspect, which includes meetings. Getting staff to change the way they conduct meetings is often the hardest part. Once they do and they experience the benefits first hand, they often become enthusiastic advocates, but that first hurdle is frequently the hardest. Managers will have to work closely with staff and persist. Glitches may be common in the early days, but the rewards will be worthwhile.

The drive towards a paperless future is gathering pace, but there are still many obstacles which lie in the way. Technology needs to be adopted and incorporated in an effective way, while managers will have to change culture and encourage new thinking.

The Future of Digital Meetings

Tom Cropper, Editor

How new software solutions are making meetings digital, mobile and paper-free.

THE DIGITAL meeting – it's something to which many organisations aspire but few have yet fully realised. It can be frustrating because the technology is in place, but it's still difficult to pull this all together. In order to do this, a new generation of digital meeting software solutions is sitting at the heart, pulling all these functions together into an easily accessible and usable package. However, this is only the beginning. As technology progresses, so too will the possibilities. Turning our eye to the future we see a world which is connected and mobile.

Their role is simple – to be the meeting point of the various digital technologies which can come into play. Devices such as the iPad are more mobile, portable and flexible, enabling professionals to access important information from any location with an internet connection. Today's new generation of digital meeting software takes those devices and empowers them to deliver the digital meeting of the future.

Go Anywhere

The Azeus Convene portal²⁰ takes the iPad and equips it to deliver fully digital meetings and is designed to deliver real benefits both to administrators tasked with organising meetings and to the managers when they carry them out.

Administrators will be able to gather files from many sources in multiple formats and collate them to become part of one large board pack. They can use an index to jump from one area to another for easy navigation and to quickly check if the pack is complete. Documents can be quickly distributed to attendees prior to the meeting for approval and to help them prepare. They can also quickly send messages to all participants informing them of the time and location of the meeting and any changes to arrangements.

The administrator doesn't have to print out multiple copies, have couriers chasing those people who are operating remotely or shred

excess paper once the meeting is done. It saves time and frees them up to concentrate on other tasks.

Meanwhile, participants at the meeting can quickly navigate this digital pack from their iPads more quickly and simply than a paper-based alternative. They can make any notes and comments in advance of the meeting and share any relevant information they want. All that information can be kept securely behind password protected encryption so it's safe, even if they lose their iPad.

There is no need to worry about carrying bulky documents or where they might have left their pack. All the information they need is right there at their fingertips. It is, as it's intended to be, a lot like having a document in their hands.

Making technology such as this intuitive to use will be crucial to its wider adoption. People have set ways of operating and, to be successful, technologies must work in a way which disrupts as little as possible. This will reduce the barriers to acceptance and help products go from the cutting edge to everyday use.

Into the Future

Moving into the future, technology is likely to become even more mobile and portable. When laptops became common, many people declared the age of mobile computing was on us. However, the technology kept evolving and shrinking. First came tablets, then mini tablets, and now smartphones are delivering more power than computers once had. Future technologies could be smaller and lighter still. Wearables could combine with other technologies such as virtual and augmented reality to create an even more mobile and interactive experience. One company, Atheer is pioneering AiR, a new augmented reality computing platform which could change the way we work²¹.

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Board meetings could shift away from the meeting room entirely allowing participants to convene and collaborate wherever they are



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of view – all of which can be adjusted with a few gestures. Using the AiR glasses, professionals will be able to link up with colleagues around the world via video call, view and download documents, make and review notes while keeping up with the task at hand.

"Every new computing paradigm enables a new wave of use cases and applications," said Alberto Torres, CEO of Atheer. "The next paradigm is smart glasses based AiR computing – digital information that doesn't distract you from reality, but rather, augments it. Where interaction is as intuitive as touching what you see. By focusing on deskless professionals' day-to-day needs, we have arrived at a practical platform that is grounded in reality and focused on utility."

In this way, board meetings could shift away from the meeting room entirely allowing participants to convene and collaborate wherever they are. All information could be seen and shared instantly before being stored in a folder which can be accessed by all participants.

An Uncertain Future

This is all in the realm of theory. AiR is still in development and it will be many years before technology such as this makes its way into the hands of professionals. However, it illustrates what's possible and where this technology can go. Ultimately, it may well not succeed – particularly if people feel uncomfortable using augmented reality technology, which can interrupt their own field of view. Likewise, it's possible that new technologies we haven't even thought about could quickly become ubiquitous. Few people realised the iPad could become as all pervasive as has been the case. Equally, the early pioneers of VR and AR only really saw potential in gaming – even so, both have quickly developed potential far beyond.

The future is an exciting and unpredictable place. For now, though, managers will be concentrating on incorporating the next generation of technologies which can deliver improvements in the near term. As they do, these can provide the building blocks which can deliver a more efficient, streamlined and digital future.

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