Evaluate IT

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO DEMONSTRATING SOCIAL IMPACT OF DIGITAL INCLUSION PROJECTS

Just Economics
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WELCOME
Welcome to Evaluate IT – the first step-by-step guide to demonstrating the social impact of digital inclusion projects.

The benefits of digital inclusion for individuals and society have been well-documented. Building the confidence and capacity of individuals to use IT and the internet can lead to improvements in health, better job prospects, reduced social isolation and money savings.¹

However, it is important to remember that not all projects successfully achieve their objectives and good evaluation can help distinguish between interventions that do and don't make a difference. The aim of this guide is to provide you with a simple framework for collecting evidence to show the difference your digital inclusion project makes to its participants and to wider society.

It will help you to communicate the value of your work to funders and stakeholders. It will also help you to better understand what you do well and identify any areas for improvement, thereby ensuring your project delivers the most benefit possible to its stakeholders.

The guide is accompanied by a set of resources that are designed to save you time and effort, including:

- Bank of outcomes, indicators and pre-drafted survey questions
- Excel worksheet for data entry and calculations
- Reporting template

The guide is written with the novice evaluator in mind. You’ll find all the key terms clearly defined and explained. There are also plenty of real-life examples from digital inclusion projects. At times, you may find that you need more support than can be provided by the guide and recommendations for further training are provided in case you feel you need additional support.

We recommend that you read the guide once from beginning to end to understand the framework. You’ll then be ready to work through Steps 1 to 4 to evaluate your project.

Good luck!

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW
Evaluation is now often required by funders and stakeholders. For project staff it can sometimes feel like a distraction from project delivery – at its worst, it may seem like ‘just another box to tick’. Yet, when done well, evaluation can add value to your project.

Robust evaluation sets up a feedback loop that enables you to fine-tune project delivery, so that you provide the maximum benefit to participants.

Evaluation has two main benefits for a project:

- **Proving** what you do – enabling you to clearly communicate to funders the outcomes of your project;
- **Improving** what you do – helping you to identify project strengths and any areas for improvement, as well as strategies for how those improvements can be made.

The Evaluate IT framework is designed to take the hassle out of evaluation by providing you with simple step-by-step guidance and resources – from ‘off-the-shelf’ outcomes and indicators through to survey questions and data entry tools – that save you time and effort. The aim is to ensure your project experiences the benefits of robust evaluation without the cost of hiring expensive consultants or a large administrative burden.

This section provides an overview of the framework, as well as some of the key principles which underpin it.

**A TIP BEFORE YOU START**

You’ll often get the most value out of your evaluation if you set up a steering group of key stakeholders to oversee the evaluation and the implementation of any recommendations. You might want to include representatives from your funder, senior project staff, and users.

By involving these stakeholders throughout the process you are more likely to have ‘buy-in’ to the final results and to see change occurring as a result of the evaluation.

Participating in the steering group need not be an onerous commitment. The group can meet two or three times at key stages in the process (planning, to review initial findings, to accept the report) and then continue to meet after the evaluation has concluded to monitor progress against any recommendations.
THE EVALUATE IT FRAMEWORK – HOW IT WORKS

**STEP 1**
Engage stakeholders to identify project outcomes

In this first step, you will engage participants and others, such as staff, that are likely to have first-hand understanding of the changes that result from the project.

You might want to do interviews or run a focus group. Of course, you will have a sense already of what some of the outcomes are based on your own knowledge of the project. Engaging stakeholders ensures that you also pick up on any unintended outcomes that only your participants, or others close to the project, may be aware of from their own experience.

**RESOURCE:**
After engaging your stakeholders, choose the most appropriate outcomes and indicators (ways of measuring an outcome) from the Outcomes and Data Collection Resource, available for download here: www.digitalskills.com/evaluate-it-outcome

**STEP 2**
Data collection to evidence outcomes

Once you have identified the key project outcomes, you can proceed to Step 2 – data collection. Here you will use survey tools, such as questionnaires, to collect information on how often outcomes are taking place and what the size of any change is (e.g. how much has the IT skill level of participants changed from the start to the end of the course).

You will need to survey your participants at a minimum of two points in time. You should always conduct a baseline survey at the start of the project so that you can compare their entry point to any change observed by the end of the project. The survey questions will link directly with the indicators identified in Step 1.

**RESOURCE:**
Use the pre-formulated survey questions in the Outcomes and Data Collection resource to put together a questionnaire. These have been linked to the relevant indicators. Available for download here: www.digitalskills.com/evaluate-it-outcome
STEP 3
Calculating outcomes

In this step, you will enter your survey results into a simple spreadsheet that allows you to calculate how many outcomes your project can claim credit for.

The spreadsheet also includes space for you to enter the resources – financial and otherwise – that were used to deliver the project and provides a handy dashboard to give a one-glance overview of activities, outputs and outcomes.

**RESOURCE:**
Use the Excel template available for download here: www.digitalskills.com/evaluate-it-worksheet

STEP 4
Reporting and making change

Construct a concise report of your evaluation process and findings. This should clearly set out all the steps you have taken to arrive at your findings and include any recommendations for improvements to project delivery.

The evaluation process should not end with the report – now begins the process of implementing the recommendations to ensure the project delivers the maximum benefit for participants.

**RESOURCE:**
See the Reporting template for guidance on how to construct your report. You can copy the format or adapt it to suit your needs. The reporting template is available at: www.digitalskills.com/evaluate-it-report

Each step is set out in detail in the next four sections, with plenty of examples to guide you along the way.

Good luck on your evaluation journey!
The Evaluate IT framework is based on best practice in the field of measurement and evaluation. It has been developed with a specific focus on local projects and national programmes that aim to increase digital inclusion.

Three key principles underpin the framework:

- **OUTCOME-BASED MEASUREMENT**: Measuring outcomes, rather than outputs, ensures that you are getting at quality and effectiveness as it is only outcomes that are able to tell you whether a change has taken place for beneficiaries (see Box 1 for an explanation of the difference between outcomes and outputs).

- **STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION**: Involving participants and others that are key to the project in the measurement process from the start ensures that what matters most to those directly affected is measured.

- **TRANSPARENCY**: A transparent audit trail enables readers to judge for themselves the quality of the evidence, thereby increasing confidence in the results of your evaluation.
**Box 1**

**What is the difference between outcomes and outputs?**

The difference between outcomes and outputs is one of the most important distinctions in measurement and evaluation.

**Outputs** are the easily measurable, direct results of activities – such as the number of people that attended an internet training course. They usually only tell you that an activity has taken place, rather than what happened as a result of the activity.

**Outcomes** are the changes that occur for participants and other beneficiaries as a result of the activity. In the case of the participants on the internet training course, for example, outcomes could include changes in their level of IT skill or improvements in their quality of life as a result of now being able to access the internet. Outcomes can be either intentional – that is, follow directly from the project objectives – or unintentional. They may be positive or negative for stakeholders. All of these outcomes, if they are significant, should be included in the evaluation.

Evaluations in the past often reported solely on outputs, such as the number of participants. But this provides only a measure of throughput and tells you nothing about quality or effectiveness.

Take the example of two internet courses. They may both be able to claim that 20 participants completed their course – that is, they can lay claim to the same number of outputs. However, the instructor at Provider A was extremely successful at teaching the participants to use the internet, while the instructor at Provider B was less effective and only very few actually went on to use the internet independently. Only an evaluation framework that measures outcomes – such as IT skills, frequency of internet use and changes in quality of life – will be able to distinguish between the quality of these two providers.
STEP 1

Engage stakeholders to identify outcomes
The first step in any evaluation is having a clear understanding of what you will set out to measure. To make sure that you measure all key changes that result from the project – whether they were intended or unintended, positive or negative – it is important that your primary stakeholders are involved from the start of the evaluation.

By involving stakeholders in the measurement process, you will get a first-hand account of what has changed. Some of what you hear from your stakeholders will be familiar to you, and will be consistent with your project objectives. You may also, however, find that there are additional outcomes or that beneficiaries value outcomes in unexpected ways.

For example, the primary objective of your project may be to improve IT skills in order to assist with job-seeking. While improved employment prospects may be a significant benefit, you might find that your participants also tell you about other benefits, such as the money they are now saving by being able to shop online. To provide a full account of the value of your project, it is important to include these wider outcomes in your evaluation.

Finally, this step is helpful for identifying how your project can be improved. As the engagement with stakeholders in this step is more informal than the surveys that are used to collect data in Step 2, you are often able to learn a lot about what your project does well and what it might be able to do better – so do keep your ears open for anything that might help inform your recommendations!

**WHAT IS A PRIMARY STAKEHOLDER?**

For the purposes of evaluation, a primary stakeholder is defined as any group or individual that receives significant benefit from the project, or is crucial to its delivery. The main stakeholders are usually the direct participants and project staff, but can also include others that are impacted indirectly, for example the local community, family members of participants or even the State because the project leads to changes in the use of public services.

**HOW DO I IDENTIFY MY PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS?**

Before deciding who your primary stakeholders are, you need to set a clear scope for your evaluation. You will need to think about which activities you are evaluating and over what time period. If you are involved in just one set of activities – such as running an IT course for the elderly – then this is relatively straightforward and you will need to make a decision about whether you are looking at just one course, all the courses in the
past six months, or courses run over an even longer period.

If, on the other hand, you are in a setting that runs a number of different activities you may need to give more consideration to how you set your scope. For example, you may operate a local IT support service that provides 6-week ‘Get Online’ courses for the elderly, daily drop-in sessions for anyone needing IT support, and a computer recycling programme that provides refurbished computers to those on low incomes. Your evaluation could focus on all of these areas, or you may choose just one activity.

If this is the first time you are doing an evaluation, we recommend that you start with a small scope – start with just one set of activities (e.g. the course) and restrict your time period to 12 months or less. The decisions you make about scope will impact on who your stakeholders are. Once you have set boundaries around the activities and time period, you are ready to start identifying your stakeholders.

Start by making a list of all those that experience change as a result of the activities you’ve identified. You will probably find it easiest to start with those that are directly involved in the project. You can then move on to anyone that you might have an indirect effect on, such as family members of your participants or the local community. Next you will want to think about any stakeholders that are crucial to project delivery, such as staff. Finally, you might want to consider whether there is anyone else that might bring a valuable perspective on the change you create, but is neither a beneficiary nor involved in delivery.

**ACTION**

Brainstorm your stakeholders by filling in this table
Once you've brainstormed your stakeholders, it is a good idea to revisit your stakeholder list to decide who is a primary stakeholder. A primary stakeholder is one that obtains significant benefit or is crucial to delivery. You might find that some of those on your list only obtain a very small benefit and it may not be worth including them in your evaluation. Try not to spread your resources too thinly by attempting to measure all things for all people.

For example, you might find that there is an indirect impact on your post office because some of those on your IT training course now use online billing instead of going to the Post Office to pay bills. As this concerns a very small number of course participants it will not have a significant impact on the Post Office when considered in the context of its day-to-day operations. It is likely that you will put more effort into measuring whether this outcome has taken place, than the actual benefit that has been created.

This type of test to determine whether significant benefit is likely to have been obtained is sometimes called a ‘materiality test’. You should go through your long list of stakeholders and use a materiality test to identify the primary stakeholders that will be included in your evaluation. The key questions to ask yourself are whether the exclusion of a stakeholder would a) impact decisions about how you run your organisation, or b) the overall findings of the evaluation. Keep a record of any stakeholders that you've decided to exclude – it will be important to document this step in your final report.
HOW MANY STAKEHOLDERS SHOULD I ENGAGE?

The main objective of the stakeholder engagement in this step is to identify what outcomes, or changes, you should be collecting data on in Step 2. As you are not collecting quantitative evidence at this stage (see box 2), but simply trying to better understand the types of changes that result from the activities you do not need to be concerned at this stage with questions of statistical significance or sample size.

The best guide of when to stop is a principle called saturation. You should keep engaging stakeholders until you stop hearing anything new as this is likely to mean you will have covered the most significant outcomes. If you are working with a diverse stakeholder group, you will want to make sure that you have spoken to individuals from a range of backgrounds. For example, you might find that participants in your IT training course have different experiences depending on factors such as whether they are male or female, young or old, and living alone or with others. This is known as stratified sampling and ensures that you are picking up all layers (‘strata’) within the population you are interested in.

The principle of saturation means there is no ‘magic’ number for how many participants to engage. However, you will often find that if you have a group of participants that have fairly similar backgrounds then speaking to 5 to 7 will usually be sufficient.

BOX 2
QUANTITATIVE VS. QUALITATIVE EVIDENCE

Quantitative data provides information about quantities – that is, information that can be measured and reported as a number. Examples of quantitative data include, for example, the number of participants that experience an increase in confidence as a result of your project.

Qualitative data is concerned with qualities – that is, information that is in descriptive or narrative form. In the context of an evaluation, this will be the narrative or story you tell about the changes your participants experience.

WHAT SHOULD I ASK STAKEHOLDERS?

Remember that at this stage you are interested mainly in identifying where you create change – that is, the main outcome areas that your project impacts.

It can be helpful during this step to develop what is called a ‘theory of change’ – a story of how your project uses its resources (financial and otherwise) to deliver a set of activities that lead to outputs and, ultimately, change for participants (see Figure 1).
You may want to summarise the theory of change in a flow chart or table. Figure 1 is a fictional theory of change for a programme delivering IT training to older people.

![Flowchart](image)

### FIGURE 1: Theory of change example - IT training for older people

To develop the theory of change, you will need to ask about how project activities created change in the lives of the stakeholders. Where stakeholders are not directly experiencing change – for example, project staff – you will be asking for their perspective on how change is created for others.

Box 3 sets out some of the questions you will want to ask your stakeholders. You can see that the questioning starts with some general information about their involvement of the project, before moving on to questions about change and their assessment of the project more generally. You will want to adapt these so they are relevant to your project.
BOX 3
EXAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- When did you first start with the project?
- What activities did you participate in (e.g. course, drop in, mentoring)?
- How did you first hear about the project?
- Why did you decide to become involved?
- What is the biggest change that has occurred for you as a result of being involved in the project?
- What are some other changes you have noticed? [you may want to provide prompts]
- What has been the best thing about being involved in the project?
- Have there been any downsides to participating in the project?
- What did you like about the project?
- Is there anything that you didn’t like?
- If the project hadn’t existed do you think you could have achieved these changes without it/where else would you have gone for help?
- Now that the project has finished, do you think you’ll be able to maintain the positive changes on your own?
- Are there any ways the project could be more helpful to people like you?
- Are there other people or groups of people that have experienced changes that you are aware of?
- Is there anything else you would like to add – positive or negative – about the project?
WHAT’S THE BEST WAY TO ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS?

Usually in this step, your engagement with stakeholders takes the form of a conversation – either as a one-to-one interview or as a focus group where you bring a number of your participants together to answer questions in a group setting.

You want to get at the ‘story of change’ and will use the data collection in the next step to put numbers beside the changes you identify here. By keeping the engagement conversational, you have the opportunity to develop a rich narrative of how you create change and of the strengths and weaknesses of your project.

Interviews and focus groups each have their advantages and disadvantages, and which method you choose will depend partly on your stakeholders (see Box 4). For example, if you are dealing with a sensitive issue – say you work with people with severe mental health problems – it will be more appropriate to use one-to-one interviews where individuals can speak more freely about personal matters than in a group setting.

Sometimes it is not possible to speak to people in person. In this instance you can interview people over the phone or Internet. For example, if you cannot travel to far away locations you may want to arrange a Skype interview. With some stakeholder groups it is also appropriate to engage people via email or by asking them to fill in questionnaires. In choosing a method you need to be mindful of resource implications, appropriateness of the method for the group and how you can maximise the quality of the information that you are likely to receive.

**BOX 4**
INTERVIEWS VS. FOCUS GROUPS

**Interviews**
- Confidential
- Useful for sensitive information
- People may feel they can speak more freely because they are not in front of their peers
- Can give shy people the chance to speak – don’t just hear from the loudest voices in the room
- Can be more in-depth
- No opportunity to debate, or discuss opinions

**Focus groups**
- Group setting gives the opportunity to build up a story through debate and discussion
- Can highlight contrasting experiences
- Needs to be carefully facilitated to give everyone the opportunity to speak

You might choose to do a combination of interviews, focus groups and other methods to take advantage of the benefits of each method.

Whichever method you choose, you should ensure the information your participants provide is treated...
confidentially. If you are holding a focus group, start the group by stating that any information shared in the group, must not be shared beyond the group. Wherever possible, you should also offer participants anonymity – that is, that they will not be identified in the report and that any identifying characteristics are removed from case studies.

It can also be worth asking someone who is not involved in the project to conduct the interviews and focus groups. This can make stakeholders feel more comfortable to speak honestly about the project.

Finally, if you choose to use focus groups, you may want to use a structured facilitation techniques to guide your group. You might find the Storyboard Exercise available as part of the Prove It! toolkit particularly useful (Project Storyboard and Impact Mapping Exercise Step 1 available for download at http://www.proveit.org.uk/downloads.html). This is a focus group technique specifically designed for building up a theory of change.

Once you have decided on who you will engage and how, fill in the stakeholder engagement plan below. This helps you to organise your stakeholder engagement and also provides a handy record that can be included in your report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>How many to engage?</th>
<th>Method?</th>
<th>When?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Course participants</td>
<td>2 x elderly</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>2-9th September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 x job seekers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 x job seekers with children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Project staff</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>2-9th September</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACTION**

Make a stakeholder engagement plan
I’VE ENGAGED STAKEHOLDERS – NOW WHAT?

Throughout your stakeholder engagement, take detailed notes. You will use this to write up a short account of how your project creates change for the evaluation report. You may also want to summarise this in a theory of change diagram, such as the one for the IT training included earlier. This distinguishes between short, medium and long-term outcomes. This can be a useful way of thinking about how change takes place.

The theory of change description and diagram will set out the key outcomes of your project. For example, in the previous example, the theory of change identified the following outcomes:

- Increased IT skills
- Increased confidence as a result of learning a new skill
- Increased independence as a result of being taught to carry out basic tasks on the internet
- Reduced social isolation from meeting new people on the course
- Economic savings from shopping and banking online

To prepare for data collection, we have one more task. We need to identify an indicator for each outcome area. Most simply put, an indicator sets out how you will know that an outcome has taken place. It begins to translate the generic outcome domain into something measurable.

Take, for example, the ‘increased confidence’ outcome. You might want to construct the indicator as:

- the proportion of participants reporting an improvement in their confidence levels before starting and finishing the course
- proportion who are using the internet after 3 months.

Developing indicators can be challenging, especially if you are new to evaluation. To save you time and effort, this guide is accompanied with a bank of outcomes and indicators. This resource lists indicators for the majority of outcomes that are likely to result from digital inclusion projects. It includes everything from direct outcomes – for example, improvements in IT skills – through to wider outcomes, such as those around confidence, well-being, and employability.

ACTION
Fill out the outcome and indicator table
Use your notes from stakeholder engagement to select the relevant outcome areas and indicators from the resource bank. Use this to fill in the table below. Should you have any additional outcome areas that are not covered by the resource, construct your own indicators for these.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Participant</td>
<td>Increased IT skills</td>
<td>Percentage reporting they are able to access the internet to carry out basic tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Participant</td>
<td>Increased confidence</td>
<td>Proportion of participants reporting an improvement in their confidence levels before starting and finishing the course, and who are using the internet after 3 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**A FINAL TIP**

*start your report!*

When it comes to writing evaluation reports, a stitch in time really does save nine!

A good report provides an audit trail of each step in your evaluation. It is a lot easier to write this as you go along, than to try to piece this together at the end. So – get started now!

**ACTION**

*Start to write your report!*

Start to write your evaluation report. If you are using the report template that accompanies this guide, you will be able to fill in the sections on project background, scope, stakeholders, and theory of change.
CHECKLIST

HAVE YOU:

- Clearly defined the scope – time period and activities – for your evaluation?
- Identified all your primary stakeholders?
- Engaged all your primary stakeholders?
- Identified key outcome areas and corresponding indicators?
- Developed a theory of change?
- Started writing your evaluation report?
STEP 2

Collect data
You will, by now, have developed a rich description of the main ways in which your project creates change for its participants and for other impacted stakeholders.

In this step, you will begin to collect the evidence to put numbers besides these changes. You will learn how to collect data on the:

- **Frequency of changes**: for example, what proportion of participants experience an increase in confidence?

- **Size of any change**: for example, by how many scale points, on average, does confidence increase?

There are many ways to collect data. We will introduce you to the most common method in evaluation – the survey.

Don’t worry if this is the first time you have carried out a survey. The guide walks you through the basics of data collection step-by-step. Plus, you’ll find a wealth of information in the accompanying Outcome and Data Collection resource. This is packed with sample questions to help build your survey.

**SOME BASICS OF DATA COLLECTION**

The strength of your evaluation depends in large part on how much confidence a stakeholder has in your data collection. To make this as robust as possible you will need to pay attention to not just the questions you ask, but also how you carry out the survey.

Some key considerations are:

- Getting a representative sample
- Measuring distance travelled
- Providing confidentiality

**GETTING A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE**

One of the key considerations concerns who actually responds to your survey. In many cases, you will ask all the project participants to complete the survey. The higher the proportion that complete the survey – this number is known as the response rate – the more confidence your evaluation is likely to inspire. You will want to consider whether there is a particular time when participants are more likely to fill in the survey – for example, could you ask them to complete it at the start or end of a course session? – and whether you might be able to offer a small prize as an incentive to encourage a higher response rate.

You want to be particularly mindful that your sample is representative of participants in general. That is, you want to avoid what is known as response bias. This is where the survey is more likely to be filled in by participants that have a particular set of experiences or characteristics. For example, it may be that only those who had a positive experience are motivated to fill in the survey. This would skew the results, giving the impression that the project is more
successful than it actually is. Ask yourself when planning how you will administer your survey, whether there are any factors that are likely to systematically discourage or prevent a particular group from responding.

Asking simple demographic questions will give you an insight into how representative your sample is. If you find that some groups are underrepresented you can always boost your sample with that particular demographic at a later stage. Do be attentive to how you frame any demographic questions. Some respondents do not feel comfortable answering these, particularly if they are not carefully worded. See the ‘Outcomes and Data Collection’ resource for sample background questions.

MEASURING DISTANCE TRAVELLED

To be able to evidence how something has changed you need to have measured at multiple points in time – usually a starting point, or what is known as a baseline measure, and an endpoint. For example, if you are interested in how the IT skills of course participants have changed as a result of attending the course provided by your project, you will want to assess their skills at the start of the course and at the end. The difference in skill level is the change that can be attributed to your course.

Surveying only at the end of a project is one of the most common mistakes in evaluations. Plan from the outset to take a baseline measure when you first engage participants – whether that is at the start of a course, or when they first access your drop-in support.

ETHICAL ISSUES

It is important to be mindful of any ethical considerations when carrying out your research. You should assess whether the project is likely to be high risk – for example, involving children or covering sensitive topics. If you feel there are significant ethical concerns you may want to make adjustments to your method to minimise them, such as asking adults to report on outcomes for children.

To encourage respondents to complete the survey honestly, it is important to provide a confidential means of completing the survey. Using online survey tools, such as Survey Monkey or Google Forms (more on this later!), can help with collecting responses anonymously. You will also want to ensure that the questions on the survey do not request information that can identify individual participants.

Sometimes when measuring distance travelled it is helpful to match up the before and after surveys of participants. To enable this, but still provide participants with confidentiality, provide each respondent with a unique participant number (e.g. X1, X2, X3). Keep a separate file that is not seen by those analysing the data that lists the participants name next to their participant code.
Always ensure that data is stored securely and let participants know that you take data protection seriously. Ensure that if you are using an online survey tool, the username and password are stored securely. Paper surveys should also be stored securely and destroyed once a project is complete. You may also want to include a consent statement on your survey as well as your contact details in case participants have any queries (see sample survey).

CONSTRUCTING YOUR SURVEY

Now that we have got some of the principles of data collection out of the way, we can move on to the practicalities of constructing your survey.

The sample questions in the Outcome and Data Collection resource mean that you don’t have to start from scratch. You should be able to find the majority, if not all, of the questions you need in the resource. These questions have been carefully developed to ensure that the wording is accessible and avoids response bias. We encourage you to use these without altering the wording as much as possible.

There are some key things to bear in mind when pulling together your survey:

- **Keep it concise:** ask all the questions you need, but no more. A long survey will put people off and reduce your response rate.

- **Make it accessible:** keep the wording simple and don’t make the page too text-heavy. If using an online survey tool, make sure all your participants have the skills to complete it. Make sure the font is large enough for anyone with visual impairments.

In addition to collecting data on outcomes, you may also want to collect some background information to help you analyse the results. For example, you might want to know the age of a respondent so that you can compare the outcomes achieved by participants in different age groups. These questions will also help with assessing the representativeness of your sample as described above.

In the endpoint survey, you will also want to follow each ‘outcome’ question with an **attribution rating scale**. The attribution rating scale asks the respondent to say how much of the change in the outcome is down to the project. For example, if you are teaching elderly people how to use the internet, it is possible that between sessions the participant’s granddaughter is coaching them and some of the increase in IT skills may be down to her. The attribution scale provides the respondent with the opportunity to say what percentage of the observed change is the result of the course as opposed to other factors. This helps to disentangle the extent to which the outcomes that you are observing are happening as a result of factors other than the project that you are running.
Should you need to construct additional survey questions, here are some pointers on what makes a good survey question:

- Easy to read using simple words and concepts
- Neutral and does not lead the respondent to answer in a particular way
- Avoids double-negatives
- Follows a standard response scale (e.g., from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’)
- Includes ‘does not apply’ in the response scale
- Questions are mutually exclusive
- Minimises free text responses, which can be difficult to analyse

Once you have established your list of questions, it is important to arrange them in a logical order. You may want to follow the template structure set out in Box 5.

**BOX 5
SURVEY TEMPLATE**

This survey template provides an indication of how you might structure your survey. Not all sections will be relevant to your evaluation and certain questions are for inclusion only in the end-point survey. Pre-drafted survey questions – both for background and outcome questions – can be found in the *Outcomes and data collection* resource.

**INTRODUCTORY TEXT**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your response will be treated as confidential and will only be used to help us understand how effective our work is. You do not have to answer any questions, but returning a completed questionnaire implies consent to participate in the project and to the use of your personal data. The results will not be disseminated in any public form, nor used for any other purpose than stated here.

*For baseline:* We will ask you the same questions again at the end of the project, so that we can see what has changed for you as a result of being involved in Project X.

The survey will take approximately X minutes to complete.

*(Any further instructions)*
Participant Code (if using to compare before and after responses)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
(as appropriate and relevant)
E.g. Age, gender, employment status, family status, ethnicity, language

PROJECT INFORMATION
E.g. How long ago did you first start at Project X?
[In the last month] [2-3 months] [4-6 months] [7-12 months] [More than 12 months]

E.g. How often do you attend Project X?
[2-3 times a week] [Once a week] [Once a fortnight] [Once a month] [Once very few months]

E.g. What activities do you access?
[IT skills course] [Internet drop in]

OUTCOMES
E.g. How confident do you feel using the internet?
[Very confident] [Fairly confident] [Neither confident nor not confident] [Not very confident]
[Not at all confident] [Don’t know]

For endpoint survey, follow with an attribution scale (see page 27 for an explanation):

Thinking back to the start of the course, how much of the change in your confidence is down to the course rather than other factors (for example, help from a relative or friend)?
[None] [Some] [About half] [Most of it] [All]

Insert questions for remaining outcomes

GENERAL
Is there anything you would like to tell us about your experience with Project X?
[Free-text field]

DATA PROTECTION STATEMENT
Please tick to show that you agree to the use of this information.
When you have a draft of your survey ready, it is always a good idea to try it out on colleagues, friends, or a handful of participants. This process of testing is called piloting. It will help you to identify any questions or instructions that may be unclear, giving you the opportunity to correct the survey before you give it to your full sample.

**ADMINISTERING YOUR SURVEY**

You will want to think carefully about how you ask your participants to complete your survey as it can have a big impact on your response rate. You want to make it as easy as possible for them to fill in.

The biggest decision you will have to make is whether to use a paper survey or one of the online survey tools, such as Survey Monkey or Google Forms. Survey Monkey is one of many paid for survey services, whereas Google Forms is free. If you would like to use a paid for service check whether you are affiliated to an organisation that has an account already if you do not have the resources to fund it yourself.

The online forms have many advantages for you as the evaluator. By collating results, these tools mean you do not have to spend time manually entering data and carrying out basic analysis.

However, if you are working with participants that have never used computers before, they may find it challenging to fill in these forms, especially at the start of the project for the baseline survey. You do not want to have a frustrating experience for participants before you even get underway! If this is likely to be an issue for your participants, you may want to consider having a paper survey at the start and have the follow up survey as an online form (see Box 6 for a comparison of paper and online surveys).
The interfaces of the online survey tools tend to be very intuitive, allowing you to enter your survey questions and response options easily. A benefit of the paid for service is that they provide prompt customer support if you get stuck. Once you have constructed your survey, the programme generates a unique hyperlink that you give to your respondents. Remember to include a field in your survey for a unique respondent code if you want to be able to compare before and after surveys!

It usually makes sense to ask participants to complete the survey as part of one of your project sessions or activities. If you are running a course, ask participants to fill out the baseline survey at the start of the first session and the endpoint survey in the final session. For other types of activities, for example, drop in support clubs you might want to consider doing the baseline survey when participants first register to use the service.

There is always the option, if you are using online forms, of sending out hyperlinks to the survey by email. The response rate, however, tends to be much lower when participants are asked to fill out the survey remotely. You might want to consider offering a small prize to encourage respondents to complete the survey.

I’VE ADMINISTERED MY SURVEY – NOW WHAT?

If you used one of the online tools, then the task of data entry will be automatically done for you. These tools usually also provide you with basic analysis, such as totals and sometimes averages. You
can also view the data in graphical form, which can be copied and pasted into your report. You can usually also export the data file to Excel so that you can carry out further analysis on the results.

If you used a paper survey, on the other hand, you will need to manually enter your data. There are two main ways to do this. If you are a confident user of Excel, you can set up your own spreadsheet for data entry. You will want to have a field for each question response and then enter each participant on a unique row. If you have not had much experience of using Excel, it may be easier for you to use one of the online survey tools for data entry. Simply copy your paper survey questions into one of these programmes. You are then able to ‘complete’ surveys for each of the participants using their paper-based answers. This, in turn, will generate a data file in the same way as if the participants had completed the survey online. You can then make use of the basic analysis in the online tool and export the data file for further analysis to Excel. This would certainly make sense if you are doing a paper-based baseline and online follow-up survey.

**NEARLY DONE**

*just one more task!*

With your data entry completed, you are now ready to complete the sections on data collection in your report.

**ACTION**

Fill in the data collection sections of the report
CHECKLIST

HAVE YOU:

- Considered any ethical issues that might apply to surveying your stakeholders?
- Considered the most appropriate format (paper vs. online) for the survey?
- Constructed baseline and follow-up surveys and administered these at the beginning and end of the project, respectively?
- Put in place measures to store data securely?
- If using paper surveys, entered data into Excel or an online form?
- Completed the data collection sections of the final report?
STEP 3

Calculating outcomes
You are now ready to put numbers besides each of the outcome areas. In this step, you will be shown how to use the data collected in step 2 to calculate the outcomes that are attributable to your project.

This section of the guide should be read alongside the Evaluate IT Outcomes Template. This is an Excel based worksheet that can be downloaded here: www.digitalskills.com/evaluate-it-worksheet

The template allows you to enter information about the inputs, activities and outcomes of your project. Once all the information has been entered, the template generates a ‘Project Dashboard’ which provides a concise summary of the project.

A WORD OF CAUTION: USING TEMPLATE WORKSHEETS

Template worksheets are set up with automatic formulae that make assumptions about the format of your data. The template will only work with data that corresponds to this format.

For example, the Evaluate IT Outcomes Template assumes that you have collected data at two points in time – baseline and endpoint. If you have collected data more frequently, you will need to modify the spreadsheet to take account of this. If you have not been able to collect data at baseline but have retrospective data, you can still produce descriptive statistics from your data without reporting on the magnitude of change that has taken place.

However, this template would not be set up for this purpose. Instead, using your own Excel skills you can produce tables and graphs that convey your results. The purpose of the template is to support you to do simple calculations of your project outcomes and provide you with ready-made tables that can be inserted into your report. It should not preclude you from using other functions to do more sophisticated data visualisation.

The Evaluate IT Outcomes template has been constructed to be consistent with this guide and the accompanying resource. If you have followed the guidance in other steps and used the sample survey questions, your data should be a good fit for the template.
OVERVIEW OF THE TEMPLATE

The template has been constructed in Excel. It is made up of five distinct sheets:

INTRODUCTION
This is the contents page for the worksheet. Clicking on the red buttons will take you to each of the corresponding sheets in the template. For example, clicking on ‘activities’ will take you to the worksheet where you enter information about the project activities.

INPUTS
Inputs are the financial and other resources – for example, volunteer time – that you require to deliver your project. This tab asks you to enter information about all financial and non-financial inputs.

ACTIVITIES
This tab asks you to enter the activities that are being evaluated. Ensure that you only enter activities within your evaluation scope.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP
These four identical worksheets are for entering outcomes information and calculating the total outcomes attributable to your project. You may only have one primary stakeholder group – for example, participants. If this is the case, you will just need to fill in one of these sheets.

DASHBOARD
This project summary draws together the information from the other sheets to provide an overview of the project from inputs through to activities and outcomes. You do not need to enter any information on this sheet.

Each tab on the spreadsheet includes instructions for how information should be entered. Cells in the worksheets are colour-coded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Name</th>
<th>Orange cells contain column or row headings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enter the activity name</td>
<td>Pink cells contain instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Internet Beginner Course</td>
<td>Purple cells require you to input information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Blue cells will calculate automatically</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We’ll now work through each section of the template step-by-step.

**INTRODUCTION**

The template will open on the introduction page. From here, click on the ‘inputs’ button to begin entering the financial and non-financial resources that your project requires. Note that you can return to this contents page by clicking on the ‘Introduction’ button in the top right-hand corner of each worksheet.
**INPUTS**

Information about the financial and non-financial resources that are required to deliver your project provide insight into cost-effectiveness.

This sheet provides a simple table for you to enter the main financial and non-financial resources. If you do not have a breakdown of the financial spend by category (e.g. staff, premises), simply enter the entire spend in the ‘total’ cell.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs (describe)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs (describe)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Non-financial Inputs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-kind donation (describe)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-kind donation (describe)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instructions**

1. Enter the project spend for each category in the ‘value’ cell
2. For any other costs, describe what these are
3. The total will calculate automatically
4. If you do not have a breakdown by category, enter the entire project spend in the ‘total’ row
5. Remember to only include spend for the time period of the evaluation

**Instructions**

1. Enter the number of volunteer hours in the ‘units’ column (if applicable)
2. Record any further in-kind donations, e.g. donations of equipment, free use of premises or other resources
ACTIVITIES

Here you can record all the activities within the evaluation scope. You may have chosen to just evaluate one set of activities – for example, your drop-in sessions. If this is the case, you will only need to fill in one row of this sheet.

You also have space here to record two key output measures – the total number of participants in each activity and the number of activities (e.g. drop-in sessions, courses) that have been delivered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total number of participants</th>
<th>Number of units delivered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Internet Beginner Course</td>
<td>6-week course for individuals aged 55+ to learn how to use the internet</td>
<td>Enter the total number of participants. For example, if you have delivered 5 courses with 6 participants each, the total number of participants is 5 x 6 = 30</td>
<td>Enter the number of times this activity was delivered. For example, if 5 courses were delivered, enter 5.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STAKEHOLDER GROUP

These are the tabs where you will enter the data collected in Step 2 and calculate the outcomes that are attributable to your project.

If your project results in changes for more than one stakeholder – for example, benefits are experienced by participants and by the family members of participants – you will need to use a separate tab for each distinct stakeholder group. You have been provided with tabs for up to four stakeholders. You can always create more stakeholder sheets by copying these tabs.

Start by entering the name of the stakeholder group and the total number of stakeholders. Next fill in all the outcomes that are experienced by this stakeholder group (e.g. confidence, well-being, IT skills) as well as the corresponding indicator.

You are now at the stage where you need to enter data. You will need to know the average value for this measure in the baseline survey and the endpoint survey. If you have used an online survey tool, some of these will calculate the average response to a question for you. For others you will have to do the calculation yourself by following the instructions in Box 7.
BOX 7
CALCULATING AVERAGES

To be able to calculate averages, your response scale needs to be coded numerically. For many scales, such as responses on a 1-5 scale, the results are already in numerical format and you do not need to make any changes. For others you will need to convert qualitative responses into numbers. Take the example of a response scale that was constructed as follows:

[Never] [Rarely] [Sometimes] [Often] [Always]

To turn this into a numerical scale, you need to assign a numerical value to each response – for example, ‘0’ to all the ‘Never’ responses, ‘1’ to all the ‘Rarely’ responses, ‘2’ to all the ‘Sometimes’ responses and so on.

Once you have coded all your responses, you are able to calculate the average response. To do this, add up all of the responses and divide by the number of participants. Here is a worked example for a scale question with five respondents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average (=total/number of respondents)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once you have calculated the average baseline response and average endpoint response, enter these into the corresponding cell in the worksheet. You will see that the difference between the two values is automatically calculated for you in the next cell. This value is the average change on your scale across all your participants from the starting point measurement to the endpoint.

It is important to remember that this figure (1.25 in our example) just gives you the proportion of distance travelled on average by stakeholders. This should not be interpreted as 1.25 full outcomes as this would greatly overclaim the benefit. Instead, this tells us that on average your stakeholders have moved 1.25 points on the confidence scale. A ‘full’ outcome by contrast is the whole journey from 0 (no confidence) to 5 (complete confidence). 1.25 is therefore 25% of a full outcome.

In the next cell we must enter a formula to convert the distance travelled on the scale into full outcomes. The way we do this is to divide the value in the previous cell by 5, the total number of points on the scale. Remember if the scale is 1-5, you must divide by 4.

---

**BOX 8**

**CALCULATING ATTRIBUTION AVERAGES**

On your survey, this was a response scale worded as follows:

[None] [Some] [About half] [Most of it] [All]

Following a similar method to that outlined in Box 7, you need to calculate an average attribution rating for each outcome. However, instead of coding responses from 0 to 4, you will be giving each of the responses a percentage value. Assign ‘0%’ to ‘None’, ‘25%’ to ‘Some’, ‘50%’ to ‘About half’ and so on. Now calculate the average by adding up all the percentages and dividing by the number of responses.

Next you will need to calculate how much of this change is the result of your project as opposed to other factors, such as the granddaughter that provides extra help with getting online. You will use the data from the attribution scales on the endpoint survey for this. Box 8 shows you how to calculate an average attribution rating for an outcome.
When you have calculated your average attribution rating, enter it into the appropriate cell in the worksheet. You will see that the spreadsheet will automatically calculate the total number of outcomes attributable to your project by multiplying this value with the average change and by the number of stakeholders affected.

Follow the same steps for each outcome experienced by this stakeholder. In each case, the final column is the key value for your evaluation – it tells you how many of each outcome you can claim.

As well as reporting on the average amount of change across your entire population, you may also want to report on the proportion of your stakeholders that are experiencing change. For example, you may want to know how many reported a change in confidence as well as how large that change was. As the data are already converted into numbers, this task is relatively easy and is explained in Box 9. There is a space for you to record this value on the sheet.

**BOX 9 Calculating the Proportion of Stakeholders that Experienced Change in Any Outcome**

For each of your participants, you will need to know the value of their baseline and endpoint responses for the outcome so that you can calculate the difference between these values. This means you will need to have your data file set up as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>...</th>
<th>...</th>
<th>Confidence Baseline</th>
<th>Confidence Endpoint</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Confidence Attribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>= COUNTIF(...)......</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once your data file is set up in this way, you can ask Excel to automatically count for you the number of times that ‘0’ appears in the ‘Difference’ column using the ‘COUNTIF’ function. At the bottom of the difference column type in the following:

=COUNTIF(}
Next you can use your mouse cursor to select all the cells in which you would like Excel to search for a value of ‘0’. Once you’ve selected these, type a comma and the value ‘0’. Finally close the bracket by typing ‘)’. Excel will now return for you the number of times that the value ‘0’ (i.e. no difference) appears in the selected cells. This is the number of stakeholders that do not experience a change from the beginning to the end of the project.

To turn this number into a proportion, simply divide by the number of respondents. In the above example, there is one stakeholder that does not experience a change out of three respondents. Therefore, the proportion not experiencing a change is 33%.

You might find it more helpful to communicate the proportion experiencing a change. Simply subtract from 100%, the proportion not experiencing a change. For our example here, 67% experience a change in confidence.

The purpose of this is simply to provide you with another way of reporting on your data separate to the magnitude of change. If you are recording demographic data you could also then investigate whether some subgroups are more likely to progress than others. In carrying out your overall calculation of the magnitude of change, remember that the proportion of full outcomes should be multiplied by all stakeholders not just those that are experiencing change.
DASHBOARD

The Dashboard automatically pulls together information from the other tabs in the Excel worksheet to generate an overview of the project from inputs through to activities and outcomes. You do not need to enter any values on this tab.

You might find this a handy summary to share with your key stakeholders.
NEARLY DONE  
— just one more task!

If you’ve got a completed dashboard, congratulations!

A completed dashboard means that you’ve entered all the information that the worksheet requires. You can also now write up the results and findings section of your final report.

**ACTION**

Complete the results and findings section of the final report

**CHECKLIST**

**HAVE YOU:**

- Coded any non-numerical responses and calculated averages for baseline and endpoint outcome measures?
- Calculated average attribution ratings for each outcome?
- Entered input, activity and outcome information into the Excel template?
STEP 4

Reporting and making change
The final step in any evaluation is reporting. This section sets out the key principles behind evaluation reporting and introduces you to the reporting template, which accompanies this guide.

The publication of the report, however, should not signal the ‘end’ of the evaluation process. The introduction to this guide set out that evaluation has two aims:

- **Proving the value of your work**
- **Improving the quality of your work**

When done well, evaluation sets in train a cycle of proving and improving. The publication of the report – with its recommendations for building on strengths and addressing any weaknesses – should act as the start of a process that improves project delivery and increases the benefit you create for stakeholders. To this end, the final part of this chapter provides some pointers for how you can make sure that your evaluation findings are implemented.

**WRITING YOUR EVALUATION REPORT**

The key principle underpinning evaluation reporting is transparency. This principle requires you to provide the reader with a clear audit trail of how information was collected, in addition to setting out the evaluation findings and any recommendations for improving project delivery or measurement.

If you have not already done so, you may find it helpful to download the reporting template that has been specifically constructed for the Evaluate IT framework. It draws on best practice guidance for evaluation reporting and can be downloaded from here: www.digitalskills.com/evaluate-it-report

The template sets out a structure for the report and includes pre-formatted tables that you may wish to copy to input information about stakeholder engagement, outcomes and indicators, data collection and your findings. You are also welcome to adapt the structure of this template to suit your reporting needs.

Whether you choose to follow the template or construct your own, the report should cover the following areas:

- Background to the project
- Evaluation scope
- Stakeholder engagement audit trail
- Stakeholder engagement findings
- Description of key outcomes and indicators
- Data collection audit trail
- Description of findings
- Recommendations for improving project delivery and/or measurement

You should also include an Executive Summary at the beginning to summarise the key messages for some your time-poor stakeholders!
The most common reason for undertaking an evaluation is to evidence the benefits of the project to its funder, potential funders or stakeholders – that is, to ‘prove’ the value of the project.

If that is the case, there are a number of things you can do to draw attention to your evaluation findings once your report is completed. You might want to circulate the evaluation report, or a short summary, to your funders and other key stakeholders either as a hard copy or electronically. If you have a website or blog, you can also use this to showcase the evaluation findings. Some organisations even choose to host an event to launch the findings. This gives you the opportunity to invite funders, project participants, staff and other interested stakeholders from the community.

The publication of the report deserves celebration. But you also want to make sure that you take seriously the opportunity for improving the work you do. Throughout the evaluation you will have collected a wealth of information from your participants, staff and other impacted stakeholders. The engagement with stakeholders during step 1, in particular, often provides rich information about what the strengths of the project are and where it might be improved. The data you collected in Step 2 will show you whether there are any outcomes where participants are not progressing as quickly, or as far, as you might have hoped. Your evaluation report should use this information to make recommendations for improving project delivery and, hence, increasing value to your stakeholders.

Sometimes you may be surprised by the findings. Dealing with negative, or surprising information is always a sensitive issue for organisations. However, it is important that you report honestly on your results. You may find a reason for why you are not being as successful as hoped, which will allow you to set out how you are going to address this in the future. Reporting on both positive and negative findings gives your report credibility and ensures that you are getting the full benefits from carrying out the evaluation.

To make sure that recommendations are implemented it is important that
you have a clear plan of action and buy-in from key project stakeholders. Obtaining buy-in is partly dependent on having communicated the findings of the evaluation clearly to stakeholders. If you established an evaluation steering group, as suggested at the beginning of this guide, you may already have very good buy-in. Of course, it is not too late at this point to establish a steering group that is specifically tasked with monitoring progress against the evaluation recommendations.

If your project is very small, it may not be feasible for you to have a steering group and you could instead set up a regular reporting requirement to the Board. Finally, you might also want to consider setting up a way for your project participants to give you feedback on how the project is changing. For example, you might want to set up a ‘user group’ that meets bi-monthly, if you do not already have such a forum.

**CHECKLIST**

**HAVE YOU:**

- Completed all sections of the reporting template to provide a transparent account of the evaluation process and findings?
- Put in place a plan for communicating findings to key stakeholder?
- Taken steps to ensure recommendations are implemented?
SOME FINAL THOUGHTS
If you were a novice evaluator, congratulations on completing your first evaluation!

The impetus for the development of the Evaluate IT framework was a recognition that evaluation can often be a challenging and daunting prospect. By providing step-by-step guidance and common resources specifically tailored to the needs of digital inclusion projects, we hope that you have not only found the evaluation process manageable but also rewarding.

Of course, evaluation is an integral part of the project life-cycle – so if you are running a project that is ongoing, you are probably about to start on your next evaluation!
APPENDIX 1:
Additional support
HELP WITH EXCEL AND/OR STATISTICS

If you want to improve your statistical knowledge, you may consider going on a short course. You should be able to access these through a local community college. If you don't have the time or money, or just want to brush up on what you already know, there are many online resources that you can use. The following websites may be helpful:

http://www.davidmlane.com/hyperstat/index.html
http://www.stats.gla.ac.uk/steps/glossary
http://www.stat.berkeley.edu/~stark/SticiGui/Text/gloss.htm

You can also access free or paid for courses online. Free statistics courses include:
https://www.udacity.com/course/st095

For free Excel tutorials see:
http://www.skilledup.com/articles/free-excel-tutorials/

You can get help with small tasks, such as how to use commands in Excel by typing your problem into Youtube. There you will find short videos taking you through an example.

Finally, there are a number of books on statistics that may be helpful. Your library will stock introductory books on statistics, which may be a good place to start.

WRITING UP YOUR RESEARCH

It is important that you plan and design your project well and this guide is designed to take the hassle out of doing so. If you need further help in research design or writing there are also resources online that might be of use. Although aimed at academic writing, the following site gives a comprehensive overview of different aspects of a research report, which may be helpful:
http://libguides.usc.edu/c.php?g=235034&p=1559821
EVALUATION SPECIFIC RESOURCES

There are lots of places you can go for evaluation-specific training and support. The Charities Evaluation Service (http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/tools-and-resources) and NCVO are good places to start (https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/publications/print-publications?start=20).

You may also find the Proving and Improving website (http://www.proveandimprove.org/index.php) helpful for general guidance on measurement. It also contains an overview of different approaches to measuring impact and assessing quality.

If you would like further help with identifying stakeholders and developing theories of change, the SROI Network have a number of resources as well as a Guide to Social Return on Investment (SROI). They also run training for anyone who would like to take their new skills further and their site contains lots of case studies of SROI evaluations. The SROI guide is available for download here:
http://www.thesroinetwork.org/sroi-analysis/the-sroi-guide

ETHICS

If you have queries about ethical issues in your research, you can find out more information about ethics in social research on the British Sociological Association website:
http://www.britsoc.co.uk/media/27107/StatementofEthicalPractice.pdf?1427730795726

QUESTIONNAIRES

The UK Data Service http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/ contains data from large surveys funded by the government such as the Health Survey for England, The British Crime Survey and the British Social Attitudes Survey. You can access the full surveys, search for individual survey questions or access raw data. Survey Question Bank http:// surveynet.ac.uk/sqb/ is run by the UK Data Service. Use the ‘Find Questions’ or ‘Search Questionnaires’ links on the homepage to search for questionnaires and questions relating to your chosen theme. For example, if we type ‘internet’ into the search box under search questions, we see questions from the British Social Attitudes Survey and the Home Office Citizenship Survey on internet access at home and at work. You can also access specific topics by following this link:
http:// surveynet.ac.uk/sqb/topics/introduction.asp
Some further resources on developing and administering surveys are available here:
http://library.bcu.ac.uk/learner/writingguides/1.05.htm

ONLINE RESEARCH

The internet contains a large amount of published research from the social sciences that may be of use to you when carrying out your research project. For example, if you are interested in supporting people into employment, you may want to read about other research that uses ICTs to support people into work. There are two ways to access information of this kind. First, public and not-for-profit agencies regularly produce research reports on such topics. So called ‘grey literature’ can be accessed through web searches on your theme. Make sure you vary your search terms and look at bibliographies of relevant papers to get citations of other useful research. Second, you can use Google Scholar to access publications from academic journals. Some of these will only be available through subscriptions in research journals. However, if there is a publication that is very relevant to your work, try contacting the academic that wrote it to request a copy. Again, make sure you vary your search terms in Google Scholar and click on the cited by link to see what other research has cited the papers that are of most interest to you.
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