Evidence-Based Policy Making: Digital Transformation

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Quote

When the rhythm of the drumbeat changes, the dance steps must adapt

African Proverb

Setting the Stage for Future-Ready Leadership

Digital Change and Leadership

Rapid digital change challenges government leaders to evolve with new technologies and strategies.

Future Leadership Qualities

Successful leaders in 2030 must anticipate challenges, adapt quickly, and use evidence-based decision making – mindset shift

Engagement and Connection

Interactive polls and sharing digital experiences foster participant engagement and collaborative learning.

Digital Transformation

What it is	Offers new ways to improve government service delivery and governance through technology innovation
	Reimagining how government works—how we make decisions, deliver services, and build trust.
	Using technology to solve real problems—faster, smarter, and more transparently
What it is not	About new gadgets or apps
	About replacing people with machines
Examples	**Kenya's eCitizen portal** lets citizens access over 10,000 government services online, reducing queues and paperwork
	Rwanda's Irembo platform digitized over 100 public services, cutting processing times from weeks to days

Why Digital Transformation Matters

1. Shift to Real-Time Data

Digital transformation replaces periodic reports with real-time data for timely, informed policy decisions.

2. Adaptive Foresight Models

Static models give way to adaptive foresight, allowing policies to respond effectively to new challenges.

3. Enhanced Monitoring and Engagement

Digital tools facilitate better monitoring, evaluation, and stakeholder engagement for responsive governance.

4. Citizen-Driven Insights

Policy making evolves from top-down decisions to inclusive, citizen-driven insights enhancing relevance

Digital Literacy for Policy Makers

Core Digital Skills

includes IT skills, data ethics, privacy, and cybersecurity awareness.

Informed Decision Making

- Move beyond "basic" digital skills to understand algorithmic bias, data privacy, and the societal impact of tech
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Digital literacy empowers policy makers to make decisions based on reliable and critical evaluation of digital evidence.

Digital Literacy for Decision-making

Curiosity

- Ask Better Questions

- Understand the data

Critical Thinking

- Challenge Assumptions

- Inteprete dashboards
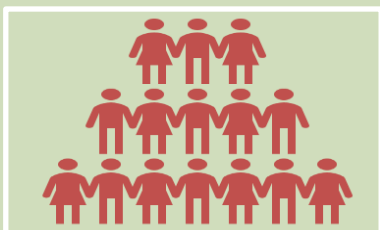
- Spot bias

Collaboration

- Work across teams and departments

Digital Literacy Initiatives

- Estonia's e-Government transformation:

Digital literacy among civil servants was a prerequisite for digital public services.

- At Kenya School of Government

Regional Centre of Competence (RCoC) for Digital and AI Skilling for the Public Service

Digital Literacy Initiatives

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Kenya School of Government

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Failure of Digital Initiatives

KSG
KENYA SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Why do digital initiatives stall?	Focus on tools, **not mindsets**
Understanding the mindset challenges	**Legacy systems and cultures**—how do we shift from 'this is how we've always done it' to 'what does the future demand?'
	Information overload—how do we separate signal from noise?
	Accountability and trust—how do we ensure our decisions are transparent and evidence-based?"

Digital Technology for Evidence-Based Policy Making

Digital platforms enable real-time data collection, citizen engagement, and rapid feedback loops.

But:

Technology can amplify existing biases if not critically assessed.

Example:

India's Aadhaar digital ID system—enabled targeted welfare delivery, but also raised concerns about exclusion and surveillance.

Big Data, AI, and Digital Tools for Foresight

Digital tools—when used well—can transform how we gather, analyze, and act on evidence

Big data and AI can reveal patterns invisible to traditional analysis, but can also entrench systemic biases.

Foresight tools e.g., scenario planning, predictive analytics, are only as good as the data and assumptions behind them.
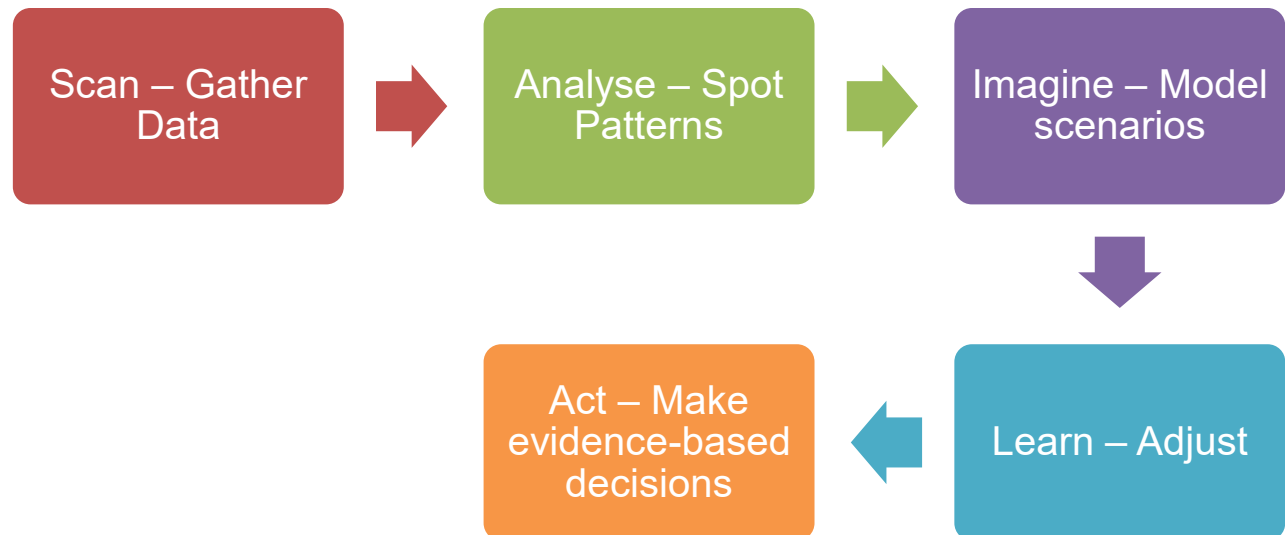
Technology is only as good as the questions we ask and the problems we define

Big Data, AI and Foresight

Big data and AI are engines for strategic foresight to spot trends, model scenarios, and make smarter choices for the future.
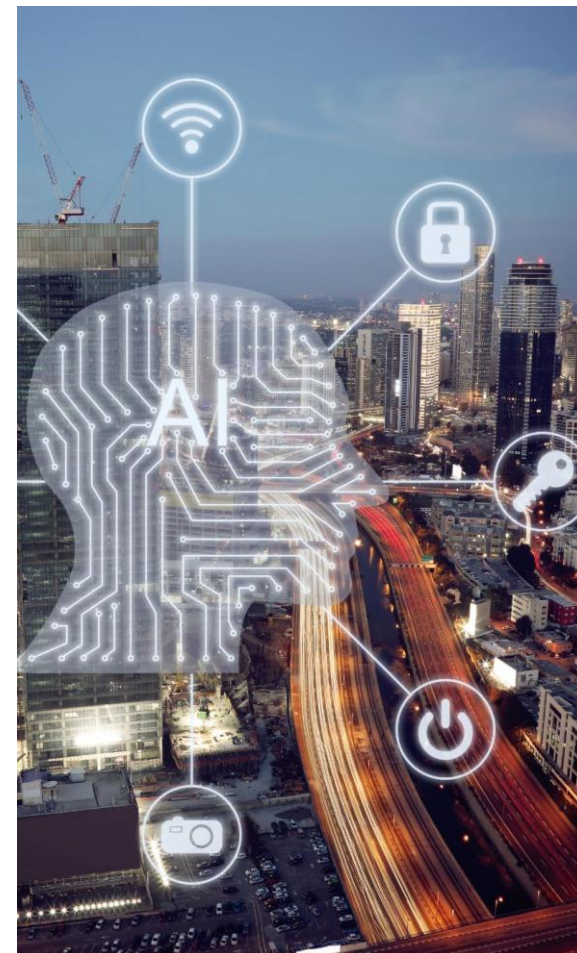
The "Foresight Loop"

Scan – Gather Data	→	Analyse – Spot Patterns	→	Imagine – Model scenarios

Imagine – Model scenarios ↓

Act – Make evidence-based decisions	←	Learn – Adjust

Big Data, AI, and Digital Tools for Foresight

African Success Stories

1. **Uganda:** the Ministry of Health used mobile data to track disease outbreaks, enabling faster, targeted interventions

2. **Kenya:** open data dashboards have improved transparency in county budgets and project tracking

3. **Rwanda:** Zipline Drone delivery system for drugs

4. **AI in South African Public Services**: Gauteng government integrated 14 departments into one digital platform, improving citizen access via web and mobile apps.

5. **AI for Urban Management**: eThekwini uses AI for water leak detection and urban safety, boosting resource management and public confidence

Tools for Smarter Policy Making

Real-time Dashboards

Dashboards provide real-time data monitoring to support informed decision making and track policy progress effectively.

Mobile Citizen Feedback

Mobile platforms enable citizens to provide feedback easily, promoting inclusivity and engagement in policy making.

Digital Registries

Digital registries help target interventions by maintaining organized data for effective policy implementation.
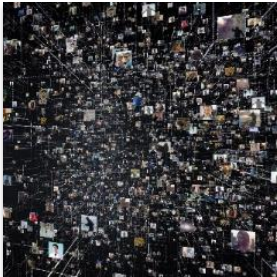
Turning Data into Insight

- Microsoft Excel

Vs

- Microsoft Power BI

Digital Intelligence for Future-Ready Policy

Big Data Insights

Big data reveals deep trends for informed policy development.

AI Predictive Analytics

AI enables predictive analytics and sentiment analysis, helping policymakers anticipate outcomes effectively.

Strategic Foresight Tools

Scenario planning and horizon scanning support long-term, proactive governance and future-ready policies.

Navigating the Digital Policy Landscape

Privacy and Cybersecurity Challenges

Data privacy and cybersecurity concerns are major hurdles in the digital policy landscape requiring robust safeguards.

Algorithmic Bias and Transparency

Addressing algorithmic bias and ensuring transparency is crucial to maintain fairness in digital systems.

Digital Divides and Inclusion

Digital divides create inequity; inclusive strategies are needed to provide equal access to technology.

Building Trust and Overcoming Resistance

Building trust among citizens and overcoming institutional resistance are keys to effective digital governance.

Strategic Takeaways

Digital Literacy for Leadership

Digital literacy is essential for effective leadership and driving successful digital transformation in policy making.

Technology Enhances Decisions

Technology strengthens evidence-based decisions through integration of big data, AI, and foresight tools.

Ethics and Inclusion

Ethics, inclusion, and trust are fundamental for successful and sustainable digital governance.

Closing Thought

Urgency of Digital Transformation

Ignoring digital transformation risks policy becoming obsolete before it is even implemented.

Proactive Governance

Leaders must adopt foresight, embracing digital tools for informed and proactive policy making.

Call to Action

Integrating digital transformation drives sustainable development and prepares leaders for the future.

Thank you