



Culture in the Digital Age: Long-term Insights Briefing 2025 summary

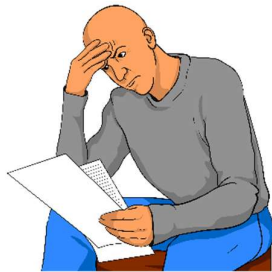


Published: December 2025

Before you start



This is a long document.



It can be hard for some people to read a document this long.



Some things you can do to make it easier are:

- read it a few pages at a time
- set aside some quiet time to look at it
- have someone read it with you to support you to understand it.



What is in this document

Page number:



About this Easy Read4

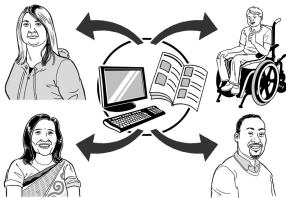


What the Briefing is about 11

What things can cause change?..... 14



Te ao Māori and stories 17



Creating stories21

Sharing stories28

Page number:



Protecting stories37



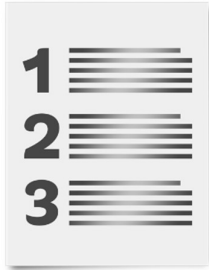
What we have learned45

About this Easy Read

Manatū Taonga

Ministry
for Culture
& Heritage

This is an Easy Read **summary** of a briefing from **Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage**.



A **summary** is:

- shorter than the main document
- tells you the main ideas.



A **briefing** is a short document that:

- gives you important information about about a topic like storytelling
- tells you the things you should think about if you have to make a decision about the topic.





Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage is a part of the Government that takes care of:

- arts like:
 - painting
 - music
- Aotearoa New Zealand heritage like:
 - important places
 - historic items like things found in museums
- media like:
 - television
 - radio
- **sports and recreation policy.**



Here **sports** means things like:

- basketball
- soccer.



Recreation means things you do for fun.

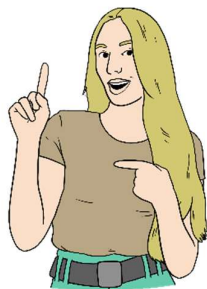


Here a **policy** is a rule for how the government does things to do with sports and recreation.



Culture is a way of:

- thinking that a group shares
- doing things as a group.



In this document Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage will be called **the Ministry**.

When you see **we / us / our** in this document it means the Ministry.



This Easy Read is a summary of the **Culture in the Digital Age: Long-term Insights Briefing 2025**.



The **digital age** is the time we are living in now.



In the digital age we use a lot of digital tools like:

- computers / laptops
- the internet
- **artificial intelligence / AI.**





Artificial intelligence / AI means computer programs that can do some of the things humans can do like:

- learning
- solving problems.



Here **long-term** means looking more than 14 years into the **future**.



The **future** is a time that has not happened yet.



Insights means what we understand about a hard topic.

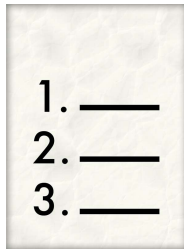


This Briefing is not about telling the Government what to do.



The Briefing is about ideas on:

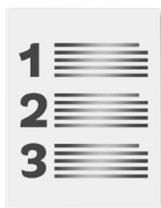
- how things may change in the future
- what could be done about some things that could happen.



Culture in the Digital Age:
Long-term Insights Briefing 2025
summary is called **the Briefing** for
short in this Easy Read.



We write a briefing every 3 years.



We choose a different topic to write
about each time.



You can read the full copy of the Briefing on our website at:

<https://tinyurl.com/MCHCDAge>



The full copy of the Briefing is **not** in Easy Read.

What the Briefing is about



The Briefing talks about how digital technology will change how New Zealanders:

- create **stories**
- share stories
- keep their stories safe.



Here **stories** means when people are doing things like:

- making movies / art
- recording history
- using social media like Facebook
- showing special objects like in a museum.





In this document we will call this **storytelling**.



We got a lot of information from different places to write the Briefing like by:

- reading reports
- asking experts what they think.



We wanted to think about what storytelling will be like:

- in the year 2040
- after the year 2040.



By 2040 **digital tools / technology** will be a big part of storytelling.





Digital tools / technology means things like:

- software robots
- AI
- a new internet called Web3
- technology you can wear like smart glasses.

By the year 2040 there will be lots of new:

- chances for storytelling
- problems that could make things to do with storytelling harder.

What things can cause change?



Digital tools / technology are changing how many things are done.



Digital tools can now be used to:

- create lots of things quickly
- share stories with more people
- keep stories safe.



There are many things that can affect what will happen in the future like:

- what is happening in other countries
- big weather events happening more often.



More things that can affect what will happen in the future are:



- people around the world not getting along very well



- changes to who the people in New Zealand are like.

- how old people are
- what **ethnicities** the people who live in New Zealand are.



Here **ethnicities** means things like your:

- race like:
 - Māori
 - Tongan
- background like where you were born.





Other things can affect what will happen in the future like:

- what big technology companies like Google are doing
- how fast technology is changing
- the **digital divide**.

The **digital divide** is about the gap between people that:

- can / cannot use the internet
- have / do not have devices like laptops to use the internet
- have / do not have the money to use digital technology.

Te ao Māori and stories



Te ao Māori means the way Māori understand the world.



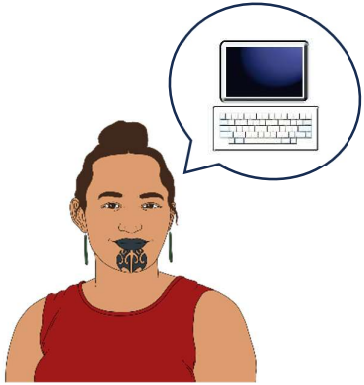
Te ao Māori is special to Aotearoa New Zealand culture.



Te ao Māori includes Māori knowledge like:

- te reo Māori / Māori language
- Māori:
 - history
 - ways of doing things
 - traditions / ways things have been done for a long time.





We need to think about **Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi** when using digital tools to protect Māori stories.



Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi is an important agreement between:

- Māori

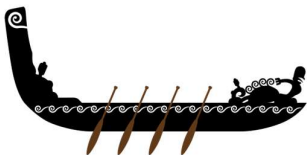
and

- the Crown.



One of the purposes of Te Tiriti is to protect Māori:

- taonga / things that are special to Māori
- mātauranga / knowledge.





Māori are already using digital tools to:

- support telling their stories
- protect their stories
- get their stories to more people around the world.



It is important others do not use Māori stories:

- in a way that does not respect Māori culture
- to make money from them
- to hurt people by changing the stories.





There must be things in place to keep Māori stories safe like Māori having:

- control over their own data / information
- their own rules to protect their stories.



New kinds of AI are being made that:

- can be trusted with Māori stories
- work well for Māori.



By 2040 the way Māori keep their stories safe might show us how to keep other stories safe.

Creating stories



This part of the document talks about creating stories in the future.



Technology will keep changing how we tell stories because:

- people use a lot of digital tools
- most businesses will likely be using AI tools in the next few years.



Stories from New Zealand will keep shaping new digital tools.





Many creative people have had bad things happen because AI has used what they have made without asking.



Bad things that have happened to creators because of AI are things like:

- people thinking bad things about the creators
- not earning as much money
- AI stealing their work.



There are also worries that AI could make social problems like ableism worse because of what information it has been trained with.



The use of technology could change how people work.



There are good things that could happen because of technology like:

- new kinds of jobs
- work being finished faster.



There are also bad things that could happen like:

- people losing their jobs to technology
- people who do not understand technology not getting jobs
- information not being true.



We need to train people to use new digital tools / technology so they can work in these new jobs.



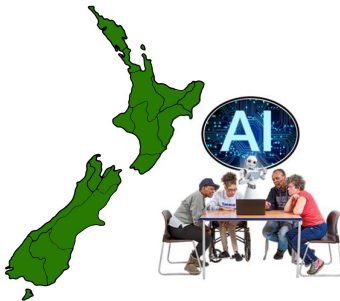
Creating stories – Government policy options



Here **policy options** means different kinds of rules for how the Government does things



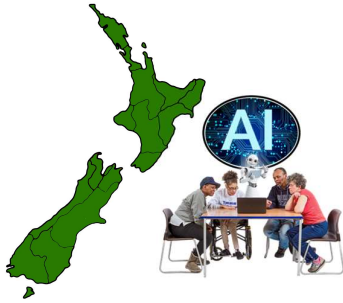
These are some policy options that could be used to support people creating stories in the digital age.



Policy option 1 is about:

- building a good **digital infrastructure**
- supporting people to design / create new digital tools.





Digital infrastructure means all the things needed to:

- use digital tools
- create digital tools.

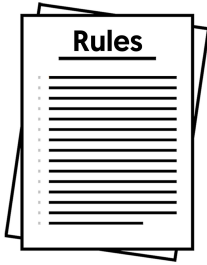


Policy option 2 is about:

- learning about new digital tools
- apprenticeships for people to learn to use the new digital tools.



Apprenticeships are jobs where you can learn new skills while you work.



Policy option 3 is about:

- making sure there are good rules for using digital tools
- keeping safe from people who use digital tools to do bad things.



Policy option 4 is about:

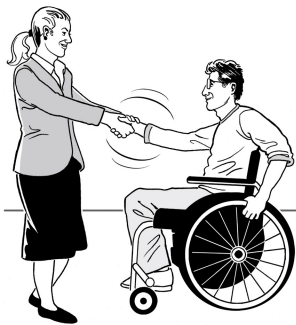
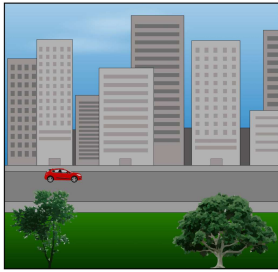
- funding community projects that are using digital tools
- supporting businesses to put money into digital tools.



Policy option 5 is about:

- working together to use digital tools to do good things
- creating **smart cities**
- funding **ethical AI**.





Smart cities are cities that have a lot of digital tools / technology for everyone to use like:

- rubbish bins that say when they need to be emptied
- places to work on new digital tools with other people.

Ethical means doing something in the right way that respects other people.

Policy option 6 is about:

- working with other countries
- selling creative things like art made in New Zealand to other countries
- getting businesses to put money into creative things they can sell.

Sharing stories



This part of the document talks about sharing stories in the future.



In the future our stories will be shared:

- faster
- to more people around the world
- in different ways.

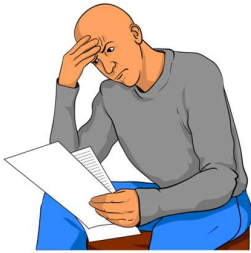


AI needs to be trained using information about New Zealand that is correct.

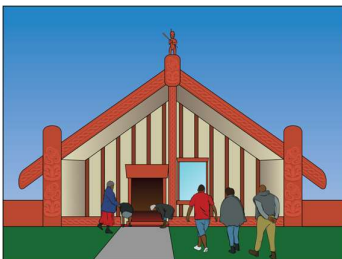
This is to make sure our stories stay the way they are meant to be.



Access to technology will change how people are able to share their stories in the future.



People who do not have access to technology will have a hard time sharing stories.



This could make it harder for people to be part of their culture / heritage.

Algorithms will choose what stories we see in the future.



Algorithms are computer programs that choose what they think you want to watch by using information like what:

- you have watched before
- websites you like to use.

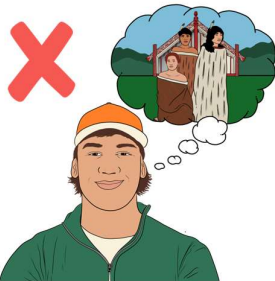


Algorithms may only show you:

- the stories it thinks you want to see
- things you already agree with.



This can mean algorithms may not show people cultural stories.



This will mean some cultural stories could be lost.



Because of this it is important for people to know how algorithms are:

- created
- trained.



By 2040 people will not be able to tell which stories are real.



This is because some digital tools will be used to create stories that are not true using things like **deep fakes**.



A **deep fake** is a video made by AI to show somebody/something:

- doing something they have never done
- saying something they have never said.



It is important people can trust that the New Zealand stories they see are true.



It is important that media in New Zealand support people to trust New Zealand stories by making sure:

- what they report is true
- people can get information that is true.



Sharing stories – Government policy options



These are some policy options that could be used to support people sharing stories in the digital age.



Policy option 7 is about:

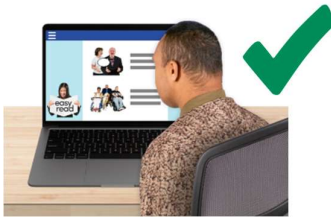
Having more:

- training about using digital tools like AI in places like:
 - schools
 - tertiary education places like universities.
- digital ways young people can work with older people to keep cultural stories safe
- AI / technology support for all New Zealanders.



Policy option 8 is about:

- ways to know what digital tools are being used for



- being allowed to train algorithms again so that they show people the things they want.

Policy option 9 is about:



- setting up rules so AI uses algorithms in a way that includes everyone



- using digital tools to write / tell stories that are true / correct.



- making sure that when digital tools are used to make decisions in sports the decisions can be trusted



- training algorithms to make sure they do not **exclude** people because of something like their:
 - ethnicity
 - name.



Here **exclude** means stopping someone being able to:

- do something like get a job
- take part in something.



Policy option 10 is about:

The Government having a way to use money to support:



- creating new digital tools / technology
- businesses to change how they do things as new digital tools are used.



Policy option 11 is about:



Working together with other countries to share information about:

- keeping cultural stories safe
- ethical digital storytelling.

Protecting stories



This part of the document talks about **protecting** stories in the future.

Protecting something means keeping it safe.



How we protect stories from New Zealand will change what we know about our history in the future.



There are new digital tools to protect our stories for the future.



But there are worries that these new tools have already caused communities to lose control of:

- their data / information
- how people see them
- stories special to their cultures.



If we do not have the right rules then communities who have had their stories **excluded** already are more likely to lose their stories.



To **exclude** someone means to leave them out of something.

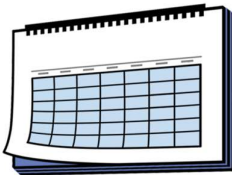


Good digital infrastructure is needed to protect the stories of New Zealanders.



The digital infrastructure of New Zealand needs to be:

- a safe place to keep stories
- able to be made bigger
- made to last a long time
- made to work with future technologies.



Governments around the world are already looking at:

- the best ways to create digital infrastructure
- how to protect stories
- how their laws can keep up with how fast digital tools are changing.





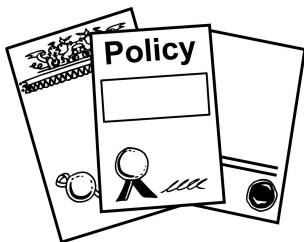
People are already coming up with good ways to support communities to have better control over their:

- data
- cultural knowledge.



New Zealand could use digital tools to support communities to protect their data / information in ways that also respect local values like te ao Māori.

Protecting stories – Government policy options



These are some policy options that could be used to support people sharing stories in the digital age.



Policy option 12 is about:

- Māori using AI tools to:
 - protect their stories
 - tell their stories
- training people to think about culture when using / designing digital tools.



Policy option 13 is about:

Heritage trusts:

- having control over data / information about their history
- using new digital tools to store their data / information safely.



Heritage trusts are places that look after the old things that are important to a country like old buildings.

Policy option 14 is about:



- supporting Māori to have control over their data / information
- having laws / rules to make sure digital tools do not cause harm
- making strong privacy laws to make sure the identity of someone is protected
- making sure new digital records are managed in the right way
- having laws about **digital twin** heritage sites
- creating an **authority** to keep an eye on new technology
- making sure technology in sports is used in ways that keeps people safe.



A **digital twin** is when something in the real world is copied in the digital world.



Here an **authority** is the organisation that controls how new digital tools / technologies are being:

- created
- used.



Policy option 15 is about:

Money for:



- digital tools that are very good at keeping stories safe
- **cyber-resilience** for stories made by AI.



Cyber-resilience means:

- stopping digital attacks
- making sure information is true
- stopping people changing information
- finding problems to be fixed quickly
- keeping things online even if there is a problem.

Policy option 16 is about:

Working with other countries to:

- support new technology
- protect stories from around the world.

What we have learned



We have looked at a lot of information about how digital technology will affect storytelling in the future.



When thinking about our stories we will need to think about:

- protecting the rights of people who create stories
- reducing harm that may be caused by using digital tools
- making sure everyone is included when using digital tools like AI
- making sure everyone is able to use digital tools.



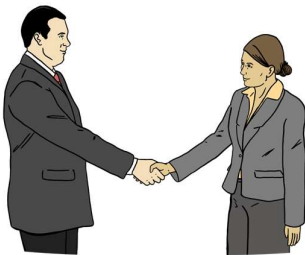


When thinking about our stories we will need to think about:

- making sure there are things in place to manage new digital tools in ways that:



- let people be creative
- support cultural stories



- supporting people / businesses to spend money on digital tools



- making sure digital tools:
 - do not take jobs from people
 - make work better for everyone.



When thinking about our stories we will need to think about:

- making laws stronger to protect:
 - cultural stories
 - digital tools
 - privacy



- making sure digital changes are about what New Zealand needs
- making sure there are more Māori leaders in the digital space
- making sure digital tools protect Māori culture



- guiding people to make digital tools that are ethical.



This information has been written by Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage.



It has been translated into Easy Read by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai service of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



The ideas in this document are not the ideas of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



All images used in this Easy Read document are subject to copyright rules and cannot be used without permission.



Make it Easy uses images from:



- Photosymbols
- Change Images
- Huriana Kopeke-Te Aho
- SGC Image Works
- T Wood
- Studio Rebeko
- Inga Kramer.

