

Construction Leadership Forum Digital and Data Strategy

Summary Report

May 2021

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Introduction

An initial exploration, via a series of three workshops, aimed to inform the digital and data strategies for construction by identifying challenges and key areas of opportunity. In particular the workshops explored the following key questions:

- What is the current landscape of digital and data in the construction industry?
- What are the opportunities for digital and data in construction in the future?
- What are the current barriers to greater application of data and digital in the current construction environment?
- If these barriers were overcome what could be the opportunity for the construction sector?

Fundamentally the strategies aim to address the issue of **how better use of data and application of digital capabilities can help enable, accelerate and enhance recovery and renewal in the construction sector**, and what needs to be in place to support implementation, with a particular focus on SMEs within the sector.

To get the widest involvement from across the sector, participation in the workshops included, manufacturers, digital service providers, contractors, consultants, skills providers, commissioners, policy makers, academics and researchers.

Prior to the workshops participants were surveyed to garner a snapshot of current digital and data practice, and to understand sector representation.

Pre-work Feedback

Analysis of an initial survey responses were grouped into four key areas for the digital and data strategies to address. These were:

- **Data Sharing & Making Data Usable**
- **Innovative Capability**
- **Digital and Data Capability**
- **External drivers and influences**



Workshops 1 & 2

Over two workshops the issues and opportunities for each area were openly debated and explored, with key elements from the discussion captured. The four areas generated the following key questions:

Data Sharing & Making Data Usable

How can we make valuable data visible and useable to the advantage of everyone in the value chain? How can we avoid siloed and hidden data that is already being generated that could have real benefit, especially to SMEs? How can we ensure that data can be exchanged and utilised across the value chain?

Digital and Data Capability

How do we define, store, share and collaborate around data? How can we ensure trust in information? How can we support industry to make the right choices about digital and data capability? How can we support stakeholders who don't know where to start?

Innovative Capability

What are the technologies SMEs currently invest in and to what benefit? We need to understand what we can collect versus what is actually useful. Those in the value chain with the knowledge and skills can help to educate SMEs. What value will digital and data bring to a company? Lack of awareness is a big barrier constraining innovation in digital and data. There are a lack of digital and data skills in Scotland.

External drivers and influences

Sustainability and climate agenda will drive change. How do other industries use digital and data? Expert systems and AI can lead to development of more sophisticated decision support and also automated design and assistive planning. Could asset management play a role in driving change? Infrastructure change such as 5G will open up opportunities.

Drivers of change

Following analysis of the discussions across the groups in both workshops 1 & 2 (as seen in appendix 1) the key drivers of change were highlighted.

Digital & Data - what is driving change?

What are the trends, influencers, and changes that are catalysts for innovation in digital and data?

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Workshop 1 & 2: Analysis

Further analysis of the key issues and opportunities for digital and data under the four key themes led to the development of seven themes that a strategy would need to address. In a third workshop we asked what key questions need to be answered and what are the key issues and opportunities under these seven themes, and crucially who would need to be involved in driving change.

The seven themes were:

- Leadership and Drive
- Data exchange and quality
- Technological innovation
- Education and information
- Understanding value and impact
- Skills and people
- Collaboration

Summarised Themes

Summary of synthesised themes from workshop 1 & 2.

Digital & Data - Themes

What are the key areas for innovation that came up in workshops one and two? What are the priorities and why?



Education & Information	Leadership & Drive	Data Exchange & Quality	Understanding Value & Impact	Skills & People	Collaboration	Technology Innovations
<p>SMEs often on completely different level of digital maturity and therefore it is difficult to see how innovation trickles down.</p> <p>SMEs/organisations often don't realise the value of the data they produce/interact with.</p> <p>Uni/college is behind due to changes in software - i.e. large providers update each year - cost to keep up.</p> <p>Education and development is an opportunity to help adopt, explain value and build trust.</p> <p>Completely different levels of digital maturity throughout supply chain - how do you get all these train operators to have digital standards as large contractors/multi-national.</p>	<p>Innovation maybe slower to adopt in the private sector. Low cost is often still a primary driver.</p> <p>R&D investment as proportion of turnover is extremely low - bottom three sectors for R&D investment.</p> <p>Should the public sector lead? Once model is proven this will encourage adoption.</p> <p>There is a need to identify pathways to adoption - are there any opportunities for those already innovating to lead this?</p> <p>Aligning with government objectives - i.e. Scottish National Investment Bank mandate towards all things green.</p> <p>Leadership needs to underpin innovation and drive across the system.</p> <p>How we can drive innovation/adoption through asset management.</p>	<p>Data - Legal elements, who owns what and when.</p> <p>Need to ensure the accuracy, validity and relevance of data - a lack of accuracy snowballs into something less meaningful.</p> <p>Need to ensure data is open, available, visible and useful.</p> <p>Struggle to know what to do with data. Masses of data held means it can be difficult to make sense of it. Need to decide what we are using it for? What is the benefit?</p> <p>Legal concerns about a number of issues that arise when you share data and therefore risk/responsibility.</p>	<p>Not seeing the potential for asset management/full lifecycle. Focus tends to be on design, build etc rather than the end user.</p> <p>Aversion to risk of damaging career by changing course. Creates anti-innovation and a lack of drive to invest in change.</p> <p>There are opportunities in better understanding and implementing a full lifecycle approach.</p> <p>Opportunity to go back to the story board and totally re-imagine what we are trying to achieve - i.e. how we experience a smart building will be completely new.</p> <p>Adopting consumer tech is an opportunity not trying to reinvent the wheel.</p> <p>What we can collect/do vs what is actually useful.</p> <p>Clients not pushing for digital capability.</p> <p>SMEs understanding the benefits of being safer, smarter & more efficient.</p>	<p>Training infrastructures aren't there.</p> <p>There is not enough talent studying what the industry needs.</p> <p>Difficult to find trainers - suggests capability is low.</p> <p>Remote working has made accessing those with skills to deliver training remotely to a high standard easier - trainer can be anywhere.</p> <p>data analytics - there is a skills gap in terms of data analysts in the sector.</p> <p>Need to engage those in IT who can push this and build understanding around how we can make this happen.</p>	<p>Undercurrent of engaged, proactive individuals that are driving innovation in smaller pockets - e.g. Mann towards managing data powered building - A2AR.</p> <p>Openness to share data and collaborate historically has been an issue.</p> <p>Early adopters having a snowball effect - helping to recognise value.</p> <p>Blockchain - digital contracts. Aids authentication & governance, could make collaboration more transactional and less confrontational.</p> <p>In interest of big providers to own whole lifecycle process - make it difficult to move outside of their products.</p> <p>Big tech are interested and invested - due to the quantity of data.</p>	<p>AR/VR could help improve pre-construction experience and planning.</p> <p>How can we learn from existing innovation? (in other locations/sectors).</p> <p>Identifying and empowering those who are innovating to problem solve - e.g. developing workarounds to challenges.</p>

Workshop 3

In workshop 3 the combined group discussed the drivers and the seven key themes, and drew out initial priority areas for the strategy (i.e. these are all important but some elements need to come first).

The result of discussion in the third workshop was three significant areas for focus for the strategy, the key questions, challenges and opportunities and key stakeholders for each. It should be noted that time constrained debate on all the seven key themes and so only the most salient issues were discussed. This in itself gave an opportunity for prioritisation of where a strategy should initially focus its efforts.

The key areas for focus were mapped on a strategic matrix, highlighting whether they addressed industry understanding, industry capability or industry drive (all of which are needed for long term change) and if this change was at the individual, the group or system scale. The matrix aimed to highlight gaps in focus areas for further investigation where change was not being addressed, for example looking at areas that address system level understanding.

Priority Themes:

- Reaching, supporting and educating SMEs.
- Leadership & Creating the right conditions – the visibility and connectivity of support for IT and digital.
- Industry drivers that encourage digital capability.

Reaching, supporting and educating SMEs

Key Questions

The key questions that came up in discussion focused on:

- Firstly, building a better understanding of the different scales of capability and understanding what good looks like, in order to better support adoption of digital and data.
- Secondly, what is the best way of communicating the value of digital and data to encourage investment? Part of the suggestion here was how could a bank of case studies be compiled? Highlighting the effective use of data and digital in enabling SMEs to work smarter, safer and more efficiently.

Ultimately, the overarching question was “how could it be made easier and more manageable to take the first steps?” The group highlighted that it would be key to understand the range of capabilities and tailor offerings to support the individuals and organisations to reach the next level, regardless of their starting point. The group agreed other important questions that needed to be answered to support this would be:

- How could access to tools, support and solutions be made easier?
- How could we ensure a better understanding of where investment gave the best benefits/returns (at both an individual and organisation level) and in what aspects of digital and data?
- How could it be ensured that support is continual and flexible to diverse and changing needs?

Who needs to be involved?

A further discussion explored who needed to be involved and why – do they have the knowledge and expertise? Are they integral to delivery? Or, do they have influence?

Trade Federations: The group agreed engaging with relevant trade federations was important in addressing reaching and connecting with and between SMEs/ Organisations in the system. It was also highlighted that this would be helpful in gathering and understanding the needs of SMEs.

Colleges/Education Providers: Helps on a group level to build knowledge.

Third Sector: Can champion and provide training.

Early Adopters: The group highlighted that there were a number of individuals/ organisations that were engaged and already taking promising steps into utilising data and digital. This is a theme that has come up throughout engagement and it appears there are opportunities for those already innovating to lead, whether this be as case studies, through collaboration or influence.

Other Sectors/Locations: The group suggested there were opportunities to source interesting relevant case studies out-with the industry or in other locations either globally or nationally i.e. what can we learn from others.

Tier One Contractors: An opportunity was highlighted for Tier One Contractors to collect examples of how data and digital benefits the wider system/supply chain, and that this could be useful in helping illustrate the value to SMEs.

Challenges & Opportunities

The group discussed challenges and opportunities in these themes:

- There is a danger that in a recovery the digital data gap could intensify – SMEs or smaller companies not working with tier one contractors would need the most focus and support. Tier one contractors already have advanced digital and data solutions that tend to cascade to their partners.
- There is an opportunity to learn about and celebrate those that are innovating and disseminate this throughout the industry.
- It is complex to reach everyone, although it was suggested that trade federations could help with this.
- It is best to start small and overcome pain points - Break it down into different sections - i.e. partner with trade organisations to reach SMEs and ensure continual support.
- There is a cultural shift required to overcome fears.
- Not all companies are at the same stage in the journey, so there is an opportunity to categorise and group capabilities in order to understand needs. A suggested asset here was the Digital Maturity Survey.
- An opportunity in helping SMEs to identify quick, easy things to adopt.
- A challenge around clients and authorities not pushing for digital capability.
- A need to help SMEs understand the benefits of data/digital in being safer, smarter and more efficient.

Digital & Data - Key Themes

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Reaching, supporting and educating SMEs

Key Questions

- How could it be more manageable to take the first step?
- How could it be easier to access tools/solutions?
- How do we understand what good looks like?
- How could we build a bank of case studies to showcase benefits? - (Smarter, safer, more efficient)
- SMEs are on varying levels of digital capability - How could we tailor offerings to support reaching the next level?
- How do we ensure that this is continual and flexible to needs?
- How do we understand scales of capability and classify in strategy?
- what linkages could we make to other business support?
- how can we show SMEs the value of digital and data?
- How can we build an understanding of where to invest?

Who needs to be Involved?

(Why - knowledge/expertise, delivery or influence)

- Trade federations - can address the connection between SMEs and gather needs.
- Colleges - help on a group level to build knowledge
- Third sector - champion and provide training, provided with grant funding
- Digital maturity survey will provide the knowledge
- Crediting organisations
- Early Adopters - Those who are innovating can influence
- Other Sectors/ Locations - Variety of case studies
- Business gateway
- CSIC
- Tier 1 Contractors - collect examples of benefits to supply chain

Challenges/Opportunities

- In recovery season - SME (smaller companies) not working with tier 1's effort needs most focus. Tier 1 already have advanced digital and data solutions. This will be cascaded to their partners.
- Celebrate those that are innovating and disseminate this out
- Complex to reach out to everyone
- Could also capture public information - client is driver so this could help diversify understanding
- SMEs - Lack of awareness, understanding or uncertain where to invest
- Difficult to say who is going to lead due to the scale - from capability to link into websites / mailing lists to people already collaborating on a higher level
- Starting small to overcome painpoints
- Chunk down into different sections - i.e. trade organisations funnel into and continually support
- Ability to prove quality
- Cultural shift - overcomes fear of loss of control
- Grouping capabilities - i.e. if you can do a, b & c in group 1 etc. Helps identify digital maturity
- Ease of adoption - help SMEs identify the quick, easy things to adopt
- Clients/authorities not pushing for digital capability
- SMEs understanding the benefits of being safer, smarter & more efficient
- Create a bank of case studies that shows the benefits

Leadership & Creating the right conditions – the visibility and connectivity of support for IT and digital.

Key Questions

The key questions that came up in discussion focused on:

- Firstly, how as a system could those already innovating be highlighted and assist in transferring innovation into practice? How is information transferred throughout the system?
- Building on this the group discussed how the visibility of both technological improvements and the support to implement them could be more visible and accessible?

In order to kickstart this, key questions are:

- Could there be industry wide incentives to champion innovation?
- Do we need to engage more SMEs on the tech side - i.e. not your usual construction suspects?
- How could those already innovating with ways to problem solve or develop workarounds be empowered?
- How can we go about changing the culture to support embedding digital and data into what we do as a system?
- Who leads, the public or private sector (or a mix of both)? – Once it is proven to make commercial sense more will follow.

Who needs to be involved?

A further discussion explored who needed to be involved and why – do they have the knowledge and expertise? Are they integral to delivery? Or, do they have influence?

- **Universities & Researchers:** Group agreed that educational institutions help to drive innovation and can be helpful in producing case studies. A challenge here was around transferring innovation into general practice and there was a need to for better connections between institutions and industry.
- **Partners between industry and academia:** Innovation centres/labs acting as connectors and facilitators of collaboration.
- **Umbrella Organisations:** supporting individual members to understand and communicate back to wider system.
- **IT/Digital SMEs:** To help build understanding around how we can make this happen.
- **Membership Organisations (Built Environment Scotland)**
- **Funding Centres**
- **Accreditation Providers**
- **Working Groups:** To champion and help take this forward without becoming myopic.

Challenges & Opportunities

- Leadership challenge around consistency and joined up approach.
- Checks and balances required that make sure innovation is truly collaborative and doesn't lead to more siloed working.
- Opportunity to put in place grants or awards that celebrate what is working.
- Historically there have been barriers between University knowledge exchange from researcher to industry.
- Challenge around mainstreaming the innovation, there are lot of pilots that never reach wider use. It is key to understand how we move ideas into actions and at scale. In terms of research funding, it was suggested that academics are mostly incentivised to research rather than translate into industry and there was a need for an intermediary that could support transferral of innovation.

- Opportunities around highlighting case studies and stories of success. The group agreed this would help inspire and educate.
- Leadership needs early focus in order to empower education, information etc.
- Public sector should not necessarily be the leader and a feeling that learning was also required within public sector.
- Opportunity to create a platform for everyone who is doing it to stand up and share/collaborate, whether these are innovators and or those who are early adopters.

Digital & Data - Key Themes



Leadership & Creating the right conditions - the visibility and connectivity of support for IT and Digital.



Industry drivers that encourage digital capability

Key Questions

The key questions that came up in discussion focused on:

- Firstly, how can we demonstrate the value of embracing digital capability in the industry, especially within SMEs? How can we 'de-risk' the transition for companies who want to make the change and ensure adopting digital and data meets individual needs.
- The group also discussed how there is a shortage of skills and attracting the next generation of talent will be key to driving the transition to digital. Building on this the group asked who in the current industry can drive change and what different roles can they play.

There was also discussion about how other nations have made the transition to digital, asking what can be learned from outside of Scotland.

- What are the needs of SMEs in terms of digital and data? What is it they need to do better / improve for themselves?
- Is it easier to take a risk with someone's else's money rather than from SMEs?
- How can we attract the next generation of talent in digital and data?
- Who needs to be 'targeted' as the people who can drive change? Senior manager? Middle manager?
- Is there a difference between public and private sector managements? Large companies versus small companies?
- What have they done to drive change in other parts of the world?
- What is the benefit of an employer having someone in the business with the digital and data skills? How can we show the value of transition to digital?

Who needs to be involved?

A further discussion explored who needed to be involved and why – do they have the knowledge and expertise? Are they integral to delivery? Or, do they have influence?

- **Trade bodies:** federation of master builders, Scottish building federation specialist engineering contractors group SELECT
- **Professional bodies:** Scottish property federation, COSLA
- **Educators:** Teachers and educators in schools, Skills development Scotland, FE, training colleges, education
- **Suppliers** (helping the customers to buy), Supply chain school
- **Infrastructure:** SCOTS transport office, roads infrastructure

Challenges & Opportunities

- Finding the right people to mandate and drive change. Is there still a role for senior management to mandate change? Currently there are not those external policy drivers making data and digital a must.
- Levers to stimulate the transition to digital. Local authorities mandated asset management in digital will drive construction to adopt. Funding for SMEs will be key. It will need support to ensure SMEs aren't burdened by the transition. There is no great demand for SMEs to digitise. Planning, building regulations are a strong driver to adoption.
- Developing and attracting the right talent. There is a duty to attract the best of the new generation in data to the industry - the skills are there they need to be harnessed. We need to change the image of the sector - what are the opportunities, roles, and jobs? Climate is a big topic for discussion - it's appealing to younger generation in terms of attracting talent. Working with training institutions FE etc to make the industry option visible to graduates, and ensuring they are equipped with the right skills.

- Ensuring capability is matching need. Clarifying what these companies are going to need. The 'ripple effect' could take a long time. Think about the different requirements and drivers for different players.
- Showing the benefits of data and digital. Digital makes asset management more efficient. There are safety and profitability drivers.
- The 'bigger picture' affecting society. Digital and data are crucial to address issues of circular economy, carbon reduction, climate change. This is a big driver and we will need digital and data. Should, we be making the links between digital and data and the climate agenda, circular economy, carbon reduction?
- Data exchange issues and data ownership issue. Ensuring visibility and usability of data. Trust in data will be key.

Digital & Data - Key Themes



Industry drivers that encourage digital capability

Key Questions

- In terms of SMEs - what are the needs of the SME in terms of digital and data - or what is it they need to do better / improve for themselves?
- what is the benefit of an employer having someone in the business with the digital and data skills?
- is it easier to take a risk with someone's else's money rather than from SMEs own pocket - for example?
- could asset management being a mandatory digital approach a key driver?
- how can we attract the next generation of talent in digital and data?
- who needs to be targeted as the people who can do it? change/asset manager/ asset manager? is there a difference between public and private sector management? large companies versus small companies?
- other parts of world with less resource are still ahead of Scotland? what have they done to drive change? look outside Scotland.
- could asset management being a mandatory digital approach a key driver?
- how can we show the value of transition to digital?

Who needs to be Involved?

(Why - knowledge/expertise, delivery or influence)

- Is there a federation of asset managers??
- Trade bodies - federations of master builders - guidance network, Scottish building federation wide range of clients, specialist engineering contractors group SBACT
- Supplier development
- Scottish property federation, COSLA
- Teachers and educators in schools
- Supply chain school
- Professional bodies
- Skills development Scotland
- Suppliers (helping the customers to buy)
- FE, training colleges, education
- SCOTS transport office - roads infrastructure

Challenges/Opportunities

- there is still a role for senior management to mandate change
- project insurance? is it being implemented?
- clarifying what these companies are going to need
- funding for SMEs will be key. it will need support to ensure SMEs aren't burdened by the transition
- Currently there are not those external policy drivers making data and digital a must
- Local authorities mandated asset management is digital will drive construction to adopt
- there is a big topic for discussion - it's appealing to younger generation in terms of attracting talent, it requires joined up working big data and digital. it needs ongoing monitoring and performance data and this data needs to be shared to be effective and it's something everyone agrees a good thing to lay leverage point
- put the effort into the middle management - the next generation
- data exchange issues and data ownership issue
- duty to attract the best of the new generation in data to the industry - the skills are there they need to be harnessed
- there is no great demand for SMEs to digitise
- digital and data are crucial to address these issues (CE, CF, climate) this is a big driver, i.e. we will need digital and data
- Digital makes asset management more efficient
- safety and profitability drivers
- the ripple effect could take a long time. think about the different requirements / drivers for different players
- should we be making the links between digital and data and the climate agenda, circular economy, carbon reduction?
- Local authorities mandated asset management is digital will drive construction to adopt
- Planning, building regulations are a strong driver to adoption
- working with training institutions FE etc to make the industry option viable to graduates
- institutions need to broaden their mind a little bit in terms of what are valuable skills
- Planning, building regulations are a strong driver to adoption
- the climate agenda and carbon reduction is a big driver just now - this is especially true for the younger generation for example
- inspiring and influencing the next generation for the industry
- we need to change the image of the sector - what are the opportunities, the roles, the skills
- Digital makes asset management more efficient
- Currently there are not those external policy drivers making data and digital a must
- there is no great demand for SMEs to digitise

Digital & Data Matrix

The priority areas were mapped onto the strategy matrix, to highlight gaps in delivery. This indicates areas for further attention in the strategy around individual drive and a wider system understanding.

This exploration process has highlighted some key questions for the strategy to address and some opportunities on how to take this forward.

Digital & Data - Matrix

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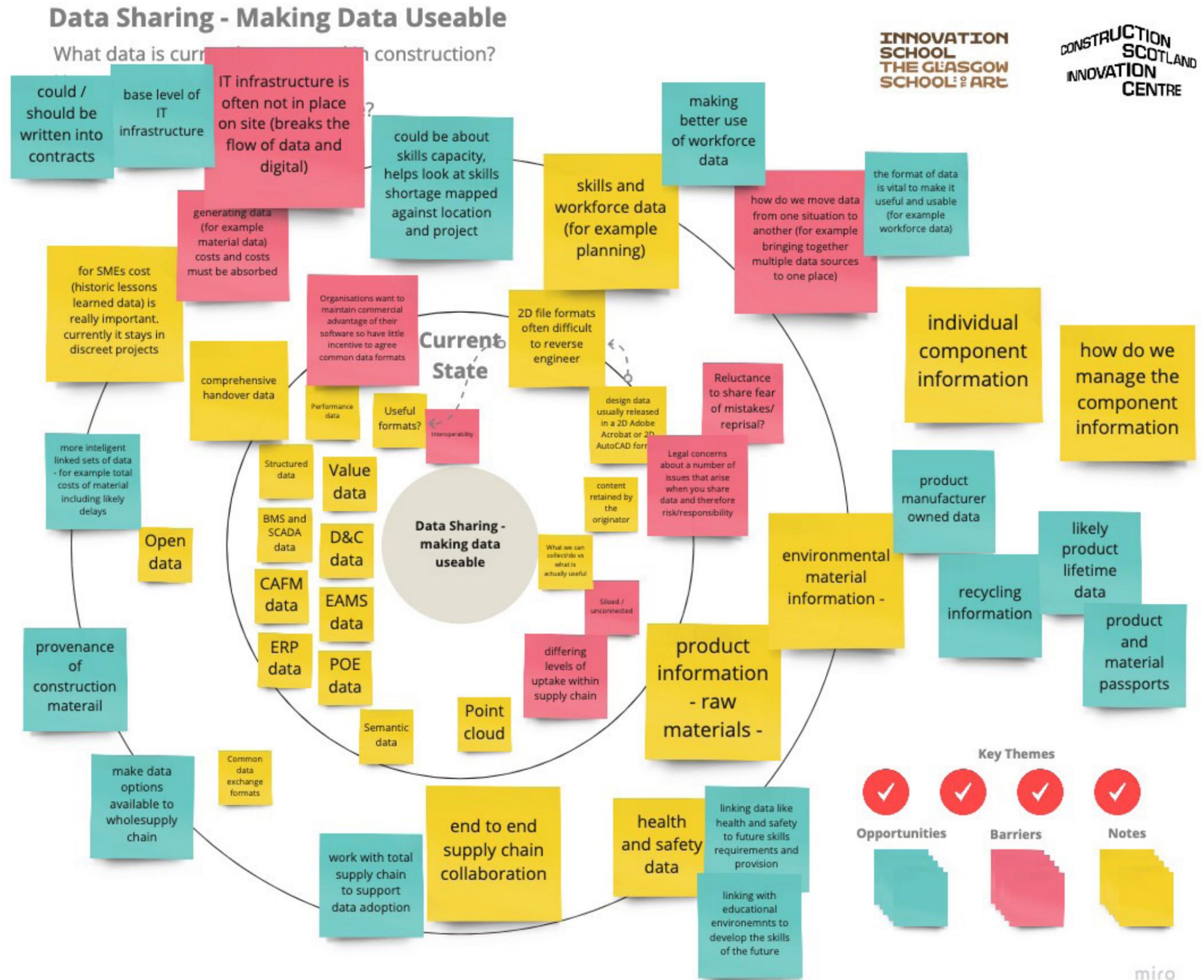
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Appendix.

Figure 1: Workshop 1 & 2 Feedback

Workshop One
Group One

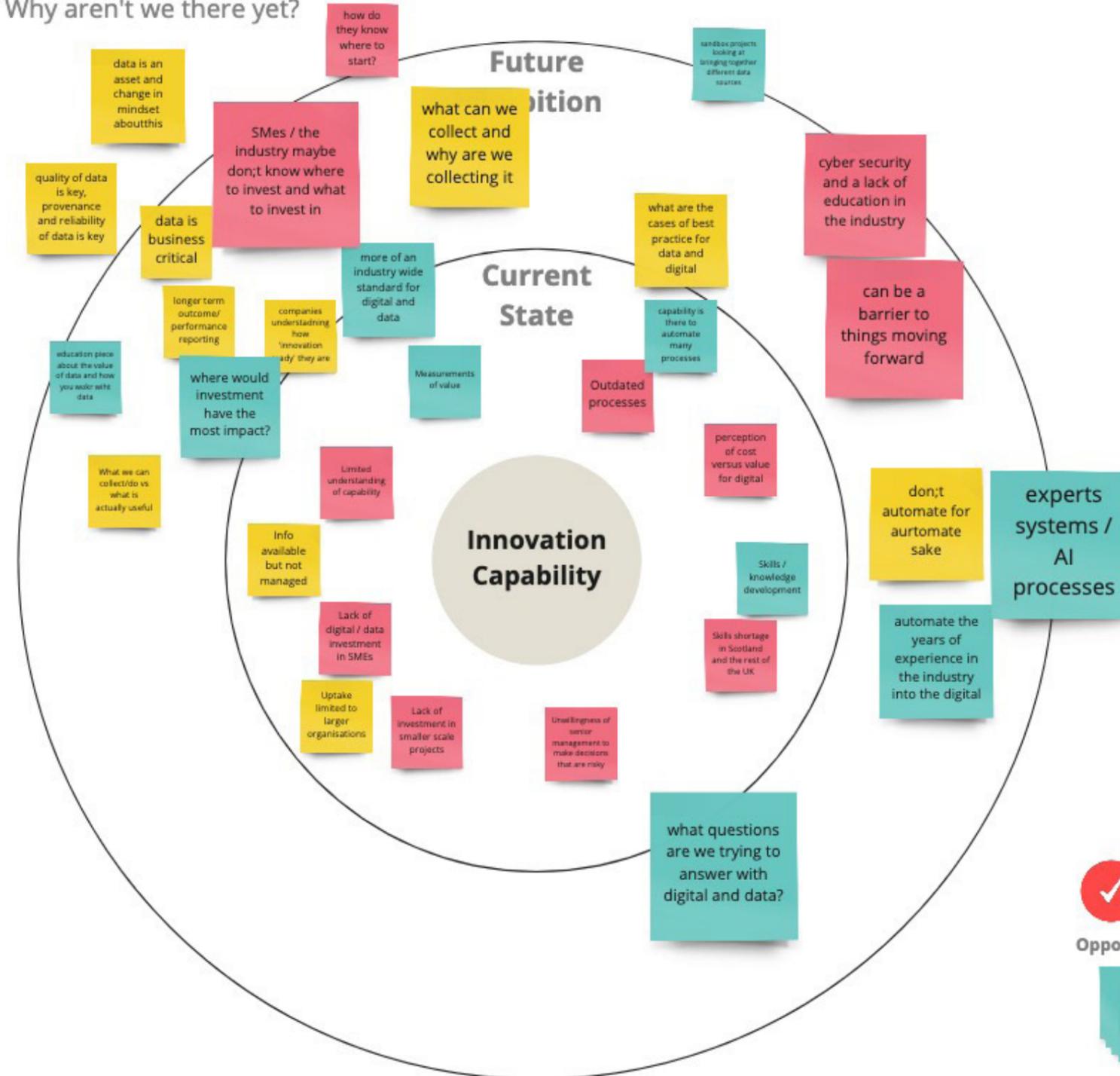


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Innovation Capability

How is data and digital driving innovation in the industry?
Where within the industry is innovation likely to occur currently?
What is the ambition for the future?
Why aren't we there yet?



Key Themes

- Opportunities (Teal sticky note icon)
- Barriers (Pink sticky note icon)
- Notes (Yellow sticky note icon)

Data Sharing - Making Data Useable

What data is currently generated in construction?
How and why is this shared?
What is the ambition for the future?
Why aren't we there yet?

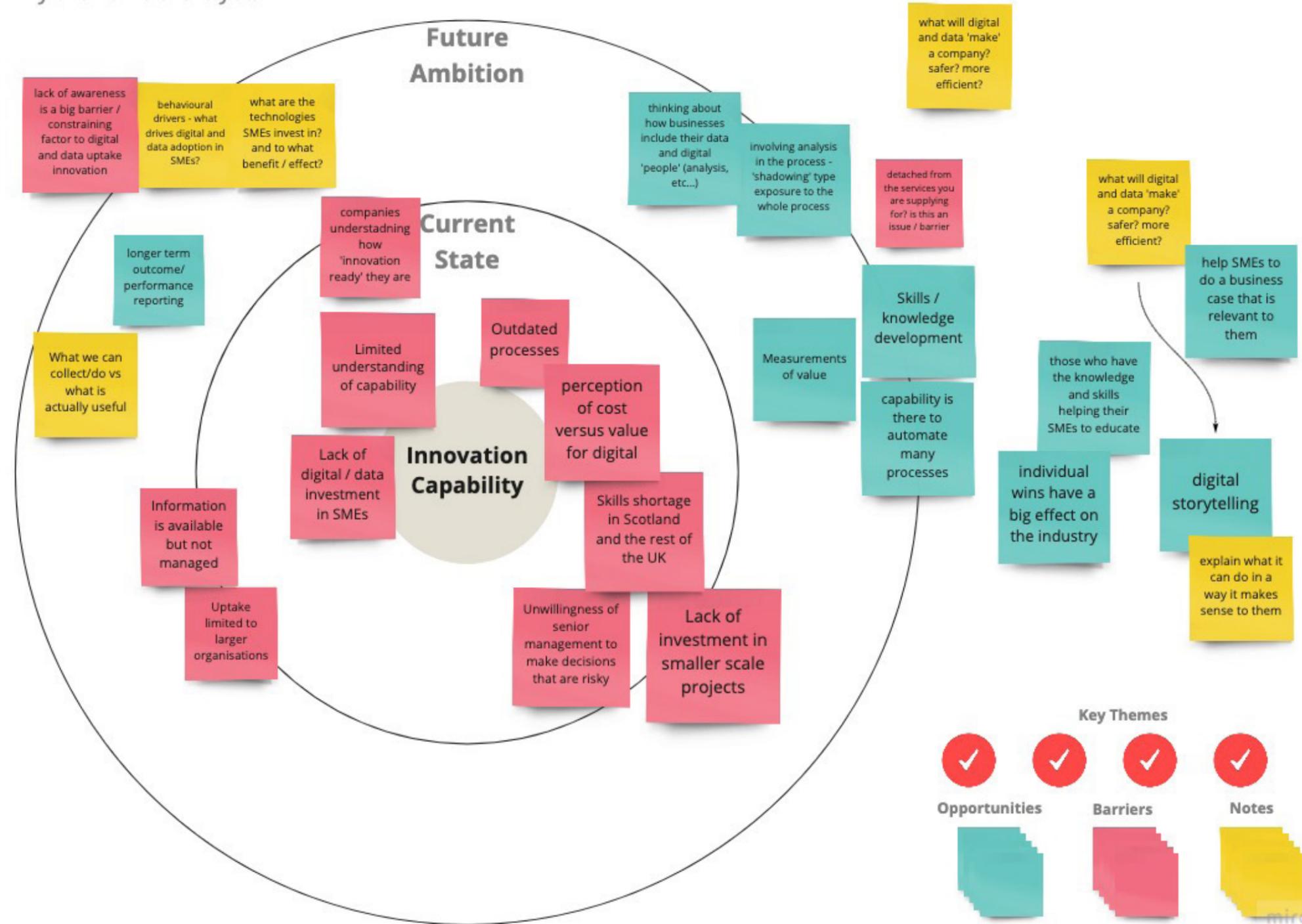


Innovation Capability

How is data and digital driving innovation in the industry?
Where within the industry is innovation likely to occur currently?
What is the ambition for the future?
Why aren't we there yet?

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External Influencers & Drivers

What are the external influencers that are driving digital and data innovation?
How does this impact the future ambition?

Why are...

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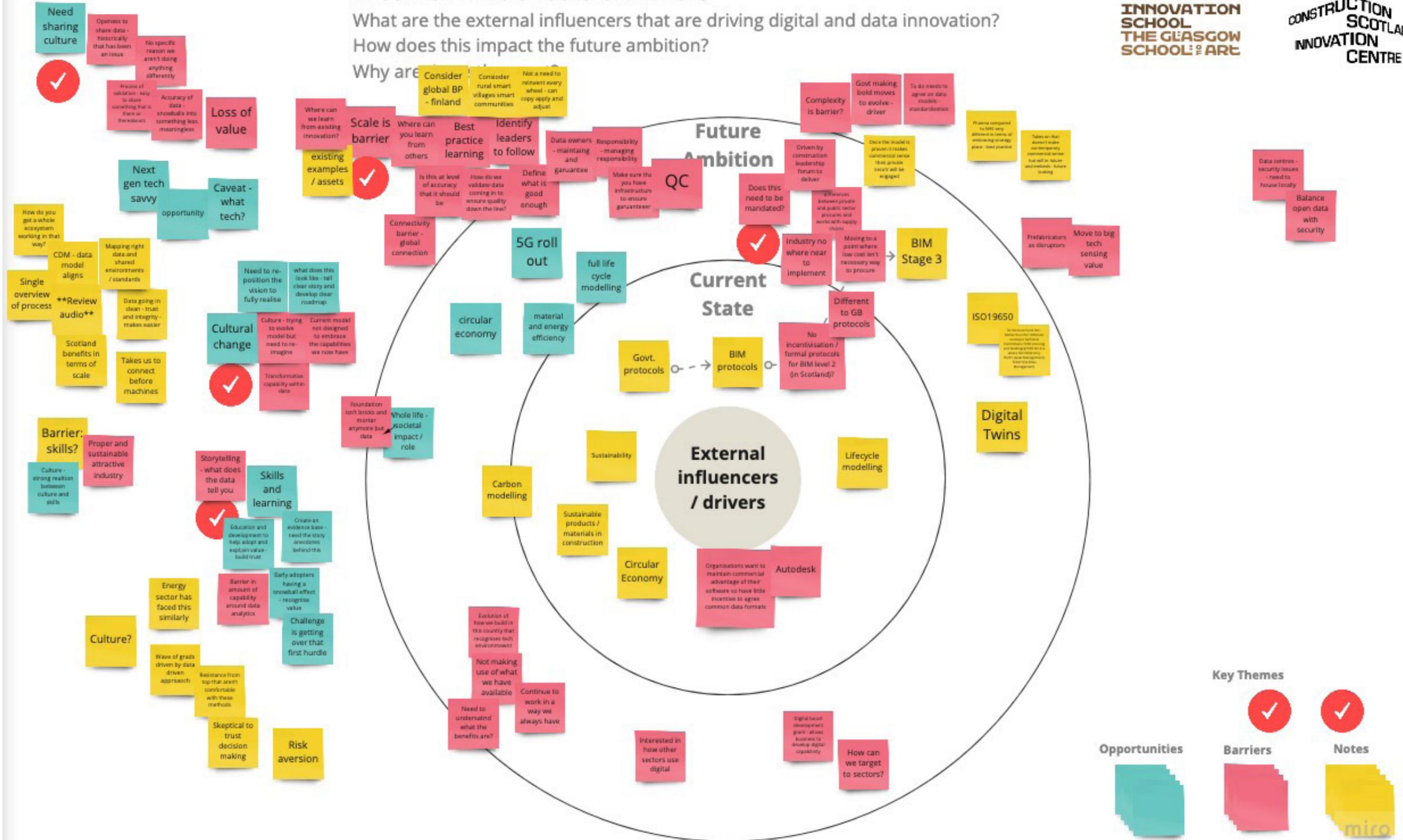


Figure 2: Pre-work Survey Feedback

Pre-work Survey Feedback

Where and how do you see digital being used currently in the construction sector?

- Structural design
- Fabrication
- Digital Building Information Management
- Planning, finances, design and the whole life needs
- Slowly moving towards the full life cycle
- Marketing
- Progress Monitoring
- Defect / Snagging Reporting
- Site Management Software
- Mobile Project Management Tools
- Used on major civils and government contracts or larger private contracts
- Used during the design, mid construction phases and in the handover processes depending upon the size of the contract or the client
- Asset maintenance
- Virtual reality simulations have been used to provide users with improved experience pre-construction
- Moving into areas such as quality control verification; sustainability and low carbon thermal modelling

What kind of data is used currently?

- Customer relationship information
- Businesses produce data in the raw form but don't manage it thereafter
- Compliance
- Collaboration
- Workflow
- Geospacial/Land survey data
- Planning/Schedules
- Finance
- Whole of Life
- Energy/Sustainable
- Safety
- Waste
- Digital design data for fabrication
- Laser scanning or drone derived imagery or point clouds
- Asset mapping

Comments

- Implementation and integration of digital construction isn't always linked so the benefits of the digital process are lost
- The larger the project the more likely a digital process will be implemented
- Smaller scale projects like housing etc see much less digital process due to either perceived cost or lack of skills or knowledge
- A large amount of digital content exists for many projects but is retained by the originator stakeholder and not shared with others for the benefit of the project
- Data being gathered tends to fall in line with the design and specification information gathered on a project by project basis

- Data should facilitate greater collaboration on a project within a controlled and managed source of accurate and verifiable information
- One use which is still to take-off is Augmented Reality. Ability to see the design superimposed on the real world could be the next revolution in construction
- Issues with data being siloed, and questions around the quality and completeness of what is being stored
- Much more could be achieved if we had a more purpose driven focus for data
- Businesses produce data in the raw form but don't manage it thereafter
- Challenges in the industry associated with the lack of visibility, traceability, and certainty in Building Information Management

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