

Serving Society: Innovation, Tech, and Local Government



Sarah Peña

Head of Emerging Technology & Business Improvement



October 2023

Creative Reimagination of Services



Established 4 years

Small team of 3

£100,000 seed
funding

Fail or win fast
proof of concepts

Enabling informed
investment

Extensible by
design

Shared by default

Emerging Technologies

Leveraging AWS AI to Reimagine Services

- **'Report-It'**; using computer vision to improve the reporting, removal and enforcement of fly-tipping (dumped rubbish), abandoned trollies, graffiti, and similar patterned services.
- **Machine Translation**; to support our multicultural communities, improving the turnaround time and reducing costs for translated materials, whilst maintaining quality.
- **Sentiment Analysis**; during COVID, a time of rapid and fundamental change, we provided a shared and real-time understanding of the impact on, and feeling of, local citizens and communities, enabling us to be responsive in focussing our services and communications where they were really needed.
- **Generative AI**; this work is in progress, so I cannot divulge too many details, though I can say we're using Amazon Bedrock and our focus is on positive social impact.



Where Swindon leads, the world follows...



Delivered by The Right Honourable Michael Gove MP in his July 2023 speech

Secretary of State for:
Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
of the United Kingdom

Machine Translation

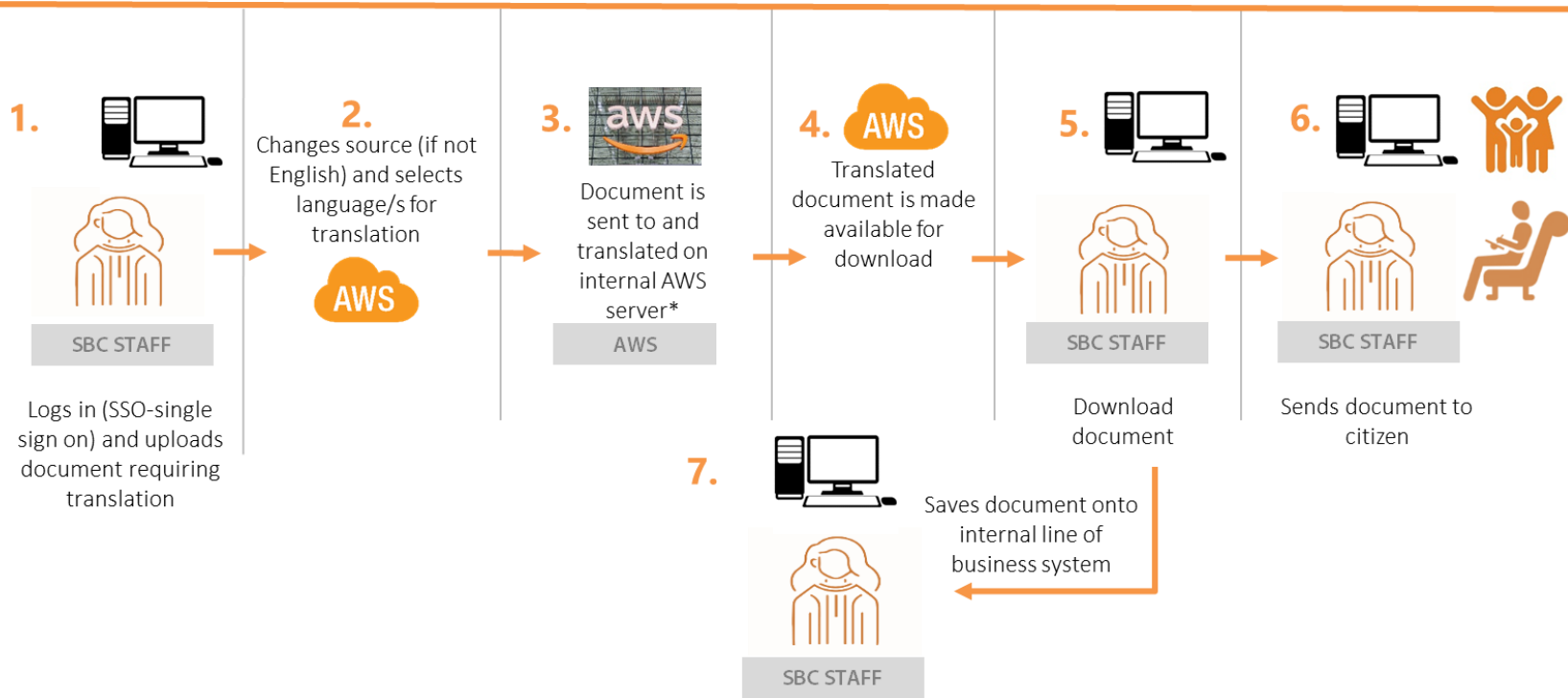
- From initial concept conversation to **launch in less than 2 months**
- Return on Investment is **6.3M%**
- Average translation **cost** went **from £159.81** per document **to 7p** per document
- Reduced actual translation time **from 3 days** to **14 minutes** and overall turnaround time **from 16 days to 30 minutes.**
- **100% of recipients** stated the materials were to the needed **quality readability standard**

We have open-sourced this solution - it's being used worldwide and is bringing positive societal impact; you can see the video story of our work here:

https://youtu.be/c_cOCT6cOLO

Machine Translation

[Document Translation \(dp6m2dsim8m1h.cloudfront.net\)](http://dp6m2dsim8m1h.cloudfront.net)



Governance!

- We're all familiar with the usual DPIA's etc... AI brings the need for different governance thinking too

- Whilst there's always room for improvement and acknowledging AI is rapidly evolving, here's a couple of extra things we're doing in the governance space:

- We're working to a set of operating principals adapted from Asilomar Principals.
- We undertake regular ethics consequence scanning.



Takeaways

- **That £100k lasted 2 years...and returned £1.5M and 16,000 hours**
- **You can start small** – what's a must is empowering an entrepreneurial and autonomous team, even in the most regulated of sectors.
- **You don't need a large budget** – you do need an achievable, evidence-based model for success; innovation can't wait, if you wait, you fall behind.
- **Be brave to try new things** – embracing uncertainty can really be the fuel for innovation - build your all-important ecosystem, create the right environment and watch it thrive.
- **You CAN do this** – it's so achievable and by investing in and growing your people you'll build a sustainable and repeatable model.

Dream big, start small, move fast

Track benefits & impact

Solve REAL problems

Create a smarter world that makes people's lives easier

Leverage the cloud for low cost and speed – NEVER forgo good governance!

Thank you



emergingtech@swindon.gov.uk



<https://www.swindon.gov.uk/>



SWINDON
BOROUGH COUNCIL